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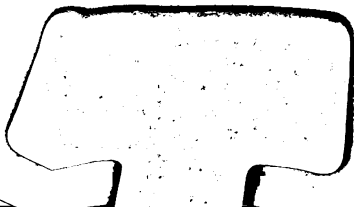
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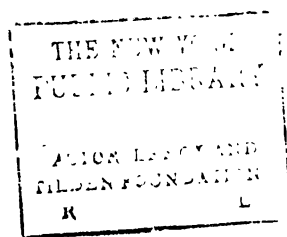
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**A WHITE WOMAN IN CENTRAL  
AFRICA**







A MACHILA.

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# WHITE WOMAN IN CENTRAL AFRICA

HELEN CADDICK

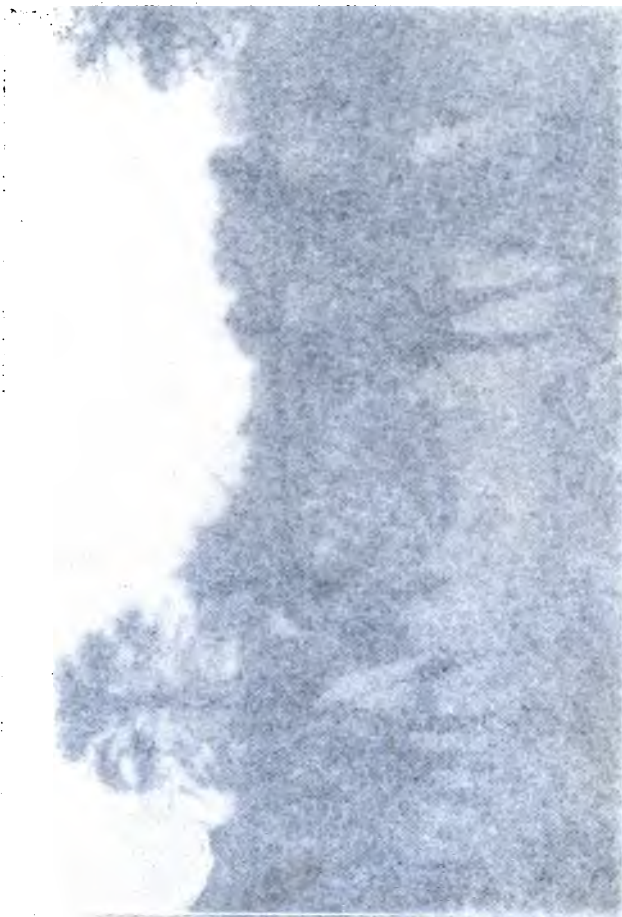


NEW YORK

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# A WHITE WOMAN IN CENTRAL AFRICA

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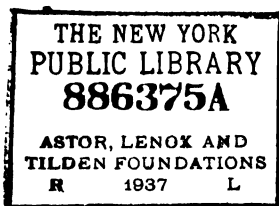
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## PREFACE

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DURING the last few years, Africa has been very much in the minds of people everywhere; especially has it been in the minds of the British people, therefore I hope it will be thought that no apology is necessary for my writing this brief account of a lady's journey from the mouth of the Zambesi to the great Lake Tanganyika, which divides German East Africa from the Congo Free State.

The journey was full of interest to me, and, having been undertaken through love of travel, and for the purposes of observation only, has presented to me aspects and incidents of native life in British Central Africa which, I hope, will interest and amuse those who have neither time nor inclination to travel so far. Also, I should like them to know how kind and attentive the natives, who are spoken of in England as 'savages,' can be to a lady travelling absolutely alone with them.

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# A White Woman in Central Africa

## CHAPTER I

### UP THE ZAMBESI

I LEFT England for Capetown early in January 1898, and after arranging some personal affairs there, I travelled to Pretoria, Johannesburg, Kimberley, Bulawayo, the ruins of Zimbabwe, and thence to Beira. I had intended going home to England from Beira, but was persuaded to visit the region of the Great Lakes. The warning with which every account of the journey concluded, namely, that I must not go alone, made me the more desirous to set out. While thinking about it, I learned that the steamer 'Matabele' was going from Beira

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to Quilimane, a place some way north of the Zambesi, and on her return would call at Chinde, which is the starting-point for the Great Lakes. I at once took passage for Chinde, and, after a pleasant sea trip, arrived there at the beginning of June.

Chinde is a small place built on a low sandbank at one of the four mouths of the Zambesi. The Portuguese, I was told, had granted to the British, a concession of a certain area of land on this sandbank, on which to build the houses and warehouses necessary in connection with the steamboat traffic on the Zambesi, and its tributary, the Shiré. Only nine people are allowed to live on the concession; two belonging to each steamer's company, and one belonging to the missionary boat. Everything is admitted duty free, if landed direct from the steamers; but nothing can be taken outside the gates of the concession into Portuguese territory without paying a certain tax. The land is being rapidly washed away by the river, and several 'stores' have

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had to be moved back to the extreme limit. The original area granted was about five acres in extent, and the Portuguese administration have now decided to make good, by a grant of additional land, that part which has been carried away by the river.

The British Consul lives on what is called the 'Outer Concession,' where he has a pleasant house with a delightfully wide, cool-looking verandah. For me, one of the most interesting attractions of the place was a splendid fish eagle that lived in a large cage close by the entrance gate. It was amusing to watch the bird throw back its head and utter piercing cries the moment a stranger entered. It was an excellent watch, and gave good warning of the approach of a visitor.

Anchored in the middle of the river, opposite Chinde, was an old hulk on which a family lived. They had made a very pretty and comfortable home of it, and appeared to be very happy there. It always seems to me as if there were

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something uncanny about such a residence. I suppose one gets an impression that it is derelict and may go under any moment.

I just missed the African Lakes steamer that goes up the Zambesi from Chinde to Katunga, and had to wait in Chinde for nearly three days for the missionary boat, which was the next to go up the river. It was rather a weary wait, as there was absolutely nothing to do. The sand on which Chinde is built is so soft and deep that walking is almost impossible; and yet it is necessary, as there is no other means of getting about. To reach the seashore involves a great struggle, but when one has got there the difficulty is at an end. Here you find good hard sand on which you can walk for miles, or bicycle, if you are the fortunate possessor of a machine. The heat during my stay was great, and as I had little to do but think about it, I suffered all the more on that account. Therefore I was very glad when the

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steamer was ready to start. This boat was named the 'Henry Henderson,' but as it was the only paddle boat on the river, and belonged to the missionaries, it was generally called the 'Pious Paddler.' The other boats were all stern wheelers.

When I got on board I felt repaid for the time I had spent in waiting, for I found it was very comfortable, and I was told, and I have no doubt correctly, that it was the most comfortable of the river boats, and that it provided the cleanest accommodation and the best food. At first I thought it very insecure, as there was no taffrail or protection of any kind round it, and I felt certain I should step out of my cabin into the river, or roll off from the little upper deck where we sat under an awning. But, of course, being in the river, the boat was perfectly steady, and did not roll and pitch as a steamer does in the open sea, and after a little while the feeling of insecurity passed away.

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During part of the voyage we had on each side of our boat a large barge full of cargo. These added to our sense of security, as there are crocodiles in the river, but they were detrimental both to our speed and appearance. Also, they made the navigation more difficult, as we were going up at a time when the river was getting very low, and the channels were constantly altering and were not very easy to find. Naturally, in many places where the steamer could have got through alone, one or other of the barges was sure to bump on the sand.

When this happened there was great fun and excitement; in an instant the whole crew of natives jumped over into the water, shouting and yelling to each other to haul and shove the boat off the sand, while the captain, a white man, danced up and down shouting directions and inciting them to greater exertions. Thanks to the vigorous measures that were immediately taken, we never had a really bad 'stick,' neither were

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those we had as bad as they might have been, as boys were always at each side of the boat with long poles trying the depth of the water, and there was an excellent pilot in charge of the wheel.

This pilot was a native, and a very funny-looking fellow. His ordinary dress was the customary loin-cloth of white calico, called a 'Nsaru,' beads and wire ornaments on his wrists and ankles, a comb stuck in his hair, and an old black frock coat, of which he was intensely proud, feeling, I am sure, that it added greatly to his dignity and importance. In his spare moments he occupied himself in combing his hair and frizzing it out, making a thick mass of it, and greatly increasing the apparent size of his head. His hair, like that of many of the natives, grew in tight little separate curls all over his head, showing the skin between, and reminding me of the South African Karroo, with its tufts of little bushes.

The natives take great interest and pride in their hair, and their ways of dressing it

## A White Woman

are many and wonderful. It was always an intense amusement to me, when I came in contact with a fresh set of men, to study the new fashions. Some shaved one side of the head completely, leaving the other, a thick bush ; sometimes both sides were shaved, leaving only a thick ridge like the crest of a helmet. Another very charming style was a sort of garden arrangement, in which little pathways were shaved, winding in and out in all directions among and around beds of hair. When the whole head was shaved, a tiny bunch of hair was always left just on the top. Mohammedans are said to leave a tuft for Mahomet to pull them up to heaven by ; the reason why these natives leave one I could not discover. Probably they have borrowed the idea from Mohammedans whom they have seen, or it may be that they have simply devised it for the sake of variety. I was told that when the whole head was shaved it was a sign of mourning ; but though that may be so



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among some tribes, I do not think it is in the case of all, as many of the men I afterwards employed shaved their heads just when the fancy seized them.

With the exception of myself (English), the captain, his wife, the engineer, and my one fellow-passenger, all of whom were Scotch, the rest on board were natives. The work of the boat seemed to be done easily and well, and without more noise than is usual on a steamer. The cooking was excellent, but that was, I believe, the result of the supervision of the captain's wife, for, when later I was left to the mercy of the native cook, I did not experience the same satisfaction in eating my meals.

There were on the boat four little cabins, each with two bunks, for the passengers, and a large cabin for the captain, and as there were only two passengers, we travelled in a most comfortable manner. We had our meals at a table set across the stern of the boat.

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Generally speaking, we spent the day on the upper deck, which was really the roof of the boat and was covered with an awning, and furnished with comfortable lounging basket chairs. From this point of vantage we could see well over the banks, and had a good view of the surrounding country.

For some distance above Chinde the river is not very wide, and its windings are numerous, while the banks are thickly wooded to the water's edge. This made the navigation difficult, and the steering, in consequence of the sharp bends, was most interesting to watch. The scenery, though it can hardly be called picturesque, is certainly pretty.

A few hours' journey from Chinde brought us into the Zambesi proper. Here the river widened out considerably, often to a width of three to four miles, though it never looked so wide, owing to the number of channels into which it was broken up by the numerous islands. The banks in this part were usually flat and low, and were covered with quite a

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jungle of grass and reeds from eight to ten feet high. Here and there were patches of a kind of waving Pampas grass mixed with papyrus, the appearance of which was very charming. In striking contrast to these were the gloomy-looking mangrove swamps which we came upon at intervals.

Not a day passed without our seeing numbers of hippos, great, unwieldy monsters, thrusting their huge heads out of the water to see what was coming to disturb their peace. Sometimes there were several on the sand-banks; and a most amusing sight it was to see them 'galumping' along to get into the water out of our way. 'Galumping' seems the only word that in the least expresses their ponderous mode of progression, which was too clumsy by far to be called 'bounding.' They are marvellous creatures, with an ugliness that impresses and fascinates as long as you are safely out of the way. To meet them would be extremely awkward and uncomfortable, if you were in a little native boat, as they have a way of

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popping up unexpectedly, and should they choose to come up under your boat, you would get a sudden shock, an upset, and a bath. Of steamers they seem to have a wholesome dread. They kept out of our way very cleverly, ducking to escape the shots that were fired off at them as soon as they were seen. Sometimes they would give a great yawn, displaying a huge cavern that looked as if they might easily have swallowed us, boat and all.

Another curious, and in a sense fascinating, creature to look out for and to watch was the crocodile—and crocodiles abounded. They were all sizes and colours. We often saw a number of them lying on a bank in a heap together fast asleep, or at all events not taking the least notice of us until a shot came and sent them tumbling into the water, one confused mass of heads, feet and tails. Even when not shot at, the least alarm will send them off wriggling and scuttling into the water with incredible swiftness. Some of the

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crocodiles had handsome skins, green with spots, others were difficult to distinguish, as they looked like logs of old wood lying on the banks; but we never had much chance of observing them, as the boys were much quicker at seeing them than we were; and the moment they shouted 'Crocs,' and pointed to where they were lying, guns were instantly fired and the crocodiles disappeared.

The crocodiles were, of course, fair game; but I most strongly objected to the way the birds were fired at. The reeds on both sides of the river were full of birds of every sort, size and colour. Kingfishers, reedmartins, and tiny birds of rose, green and scarlet colours. Of larger birds there were fish eagles, African cuckoos, black and white ibis, divers, herons, saddle-billed storks, egrets, and quantities of duck and guinea-fowl. When I remonstrated with the men for shooting at the birds, I was laughed at for not liking 'sport.' Where the 'sport' of the proceeding lay

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I could not discover, for there was nothing of skill about the shooting. It was just like firing into a poultry yard, and when a bird was killed, it could not be picked up, as the steamer did not stop. Often a number of wounded and helpless birds were left to die. One of the men who took part in the 'sport' belonged to the 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' at home, and was, moreover, proud of his active work for the society.

One day another man wounded a heron. As it flew off with its broken leg dangling, the natives shrieked with laughter and began to imitate it; upon this, the man, boiling over with righteous indignation, came up to me and said he could not stand the cruelty of the natives. 'The way they enjoyed seeing anything in pain,' etc., etc. When he had finished, I told him I thought the man who shot the bird for his own amusement was infinitely more cruel than the natives, at which he looked much astonished. I

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discussed the subject with the captain, who seemed to think the wounding of birds and animals of very little consequence where there were so many, and it was not until I told him I should leave the boat at the next station that he promised to have the shooting stopped. He kept his word, and during that journey, at least, the birds had a peaceful time. So had I in watching them, for the boat was often quite close to the banks, giving me a good chance to see them and their nests.

Among the many practices of white men out here which tend to retard the civilising of the natives, this is a prominent one. The missionaries endeavour to impress them with a sense of the gentleness and tenderness of Christianity, and yet they see professing Christians indulge in wanton cruelty of this nature. Birds and animals of all kinds are shot at, wounded, and left to die in great pain. In many parts of Africa the native fauna are fast disappearing, owing to the

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'sporting' proclivities of the white man. The tendency is to pass laws for their protection, when there is no longer any to protect.

Life on the boat was never in the least monotonous. The villages we passed always offered something curious to interest and amuse us. It was delightfully comfortable to lie lazily on a long cane chair on the upper deck and watch the way the steamer crossed from side to side of the river, in order to follow the current and dodge the sandbanks. The river was falling very fast, the channels were constantly altering, and a very sharp look-out had to be kept.

We had two goats on board, which supplied us with exceptionally good milk. This, for me, was a great treat, as I had had none for some time. The goats were well fed with grass, which the boys cut from the banks of the river as we went along. One or other of the barges sometimes got among the reeds, and then



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there was great excitement, while they all cut and pulled as much green stuff as possible without stopping the boat.

If in their excitement any of the boys tumbled into the water, they did not mind in the least, and were soon on the boat again. One afternoon we had a great fright; suddenly we heard the anchor chain running out, the engineer rushed down and stopped the boat, and then it was discovered that one of the boys had tumbled off the deck, and in falling had clutched at the chain and pulled the anchor over. Fortunately, in dropping over, it did not fall on him, and he escaped with a good scare, followed by a scolding.

As we approached Shipanga, the country became more thickly wooded, and we saw one large forest which was said to extend to Beira. Judging by what we could see of it from the boat, it appeared to be very dense. At Shipanga itself we saw Mrs Livingstone's grave, and the house, or rather the remains of the house, where she

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died. A huge baobab tree marks the spot, and can be seen in going up and down the river.

As this was the first time I had come across one of these trees, I was much struck by its remarkable appearance. It is indeed a curious and wonderful kind of tree, and looks as if it belonged to the days before the Flood. It appears as strange on the land as the hippo does in the water. One of these trees often measures seventy feet or more in circumference. The thick trunk gradually tapers towards the top. It has no waving branches covered with foliage, but at intervals thick boughs project from the main trunk, and are covered with little twigs and leaves. These branches are exact fac-similes of the trunk. The fruit is large, that is to say, about the size of a shaddock, with a hard but velvety green shell, full of small nuts of cream-of-tartar. The natives make a hole in the shell, fill it with water, and use it as a drinking cup, the cream-of-tartar giving the water

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a pleasant flavour. They fill it again and again with water till all the taste of cream-of-tartar is gone, then they throw it away and get a fresh one. These trees are found chiefly on the plains; I do not remember to have seen any growing on the high lands.

## CHAPTER II

### ON THE SHIRÉ RIVER.

DURING the voyage we stopped pretty often at 'wooding' stations—places where the supply of wood for fuel for the steamers was stacked ready to be put on board; a large supply is needed to keep them all going.

One is constantly hearing about the way the natives spoil the timber, and of their wasteful method of cutting it down to make their fires and to clear the ground for their gardens. Both charges are true; but nothing is ever said about the immense amount of timber *we* have felled for burning on our steamers. In Africa we always appear to consider the

## A White Woman in Central Africa

country ours and the natives the intruders.

While stopping at the stations, I was always glad to go on shore and have a look round the native villages, and in these little tours I found plenty of amusement, and saw many new and curious things.

At one village the Portuguese collector was having a new house built. The ground had been marked out and the floor was being made first. Its preparation was a very curious, not to say amusing, proceeding. A number of women, with babies tied on their backs, were down on their knees smearing mud on the floor with their hands. The mud used is made from the old ant-hills, and is of a peculiar hardness, and therefore suitable for floors. The hardness appears to be owing to some kind of excretion which the ants mix with the mould of which they make their hills. The clay of the ant - hills is pounded up and

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sprinkled on the ground, then the women dip their hands in water and smooth it over. The process certainly looked nasty, but the effect produced was good.

When the floor was finished, another mixture, in which cow-dung is an ingredient, was smeared over in the same way, in order to keep off the insects. The ants in Africa cannot be overlooked, they are a wonderful power for good and evil. They are splendid scavengers, but they are also destructive. In a house it is most difficult to keep eatables out of their reach. If the food is on a table, its legs must stand on glasses or in bowls of water, and it must be well away from a wall, or anything else that the ants can climb up. They are very clever at finding a bridge to help them across to the food, and once found, the table is soon swarming with them. Sometimes, when you wake in the morning, you will find an ant-heap one or two feet high by the side of your bed. I

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heard of one unfortunate man, who, on going to put on his shoes in the morning, found the tops come off in his hand. The ants had eaten all round them in the night.

At another village I watched the natives making a large 'dug-out,' or native canoe. It was made from the trunk of a large tree, with the inside burnt out. The trunk was chopped into shape with their small axes. The axes were much smaller and lighter than those our people use at home, but they seemed to do the work as quickly and as well.

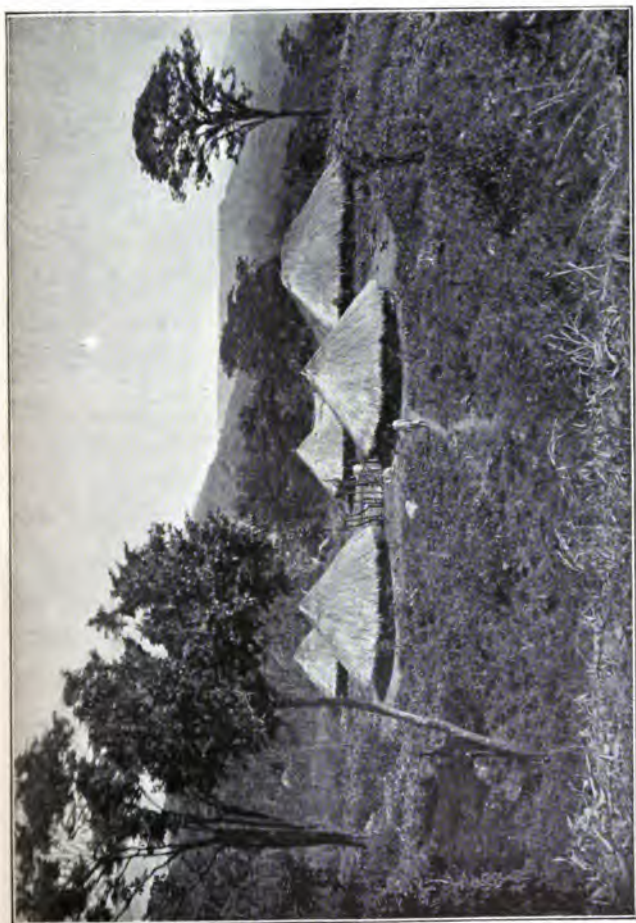
Close to the place where they were working at the boat was a wonderful blacksmith's forge. The bellows were made of a goat's skin. The head of the goat had been cut off, and into the neck there had been fixed a clay pipe which went into the furnace. Round this pipe the skin was firmly fastened. The wide end of the goat skin was cut across, and to each side was fixed a bamboo stick.

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A native sat on the ground, and taking these sticks in his hands, drew the sides of the skin apart until it was filled with air. Then placing the sticks together, so as to close the aperture, he pressed the skin downwards, and thus forced the air through the pipe into the fire. The contrivance was crude, but produced good results.

Some of the villages were very pretty. They consisted of round huts made of bamboo and thatched with grass. They were beautifully made with deep overhanging eaves, and had a sort of outer wall of grass and bamboo to enclose the hut and yard. Most of the villages were fairly clean; but all had a very peculiar smell, arising from the native corn, of which the villagers cook so much, and the bhang they smoke. Bhang is supposed to have a soothing effect, but it makes those who smoke it extremely silly. I could always tell when they had been smoking it, for after sneezing loudly they





HUTS IN ANGONILAND.

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continued to make foolish, idiotic noises until, to my intense joy, they fell asleep.

Three days' journey from Chinde we came in sight of the Morambala Mountain; and on the fourth day we turned out of the Zambesi into the Shiré River, which is much narrower and has higher banks. The scenery became more interesting, and we had lovely views of the mountains in the Shiré Highlands.

The river winds a good deal, and for one whole day we were going round Morambala. It is a beautiful mountain, covered with bush to the top; but the marsh all round, through which the river runs, is a most unhealthy spot, and swarms with mosquitoes and insects of many kinds. Consequently, we did not much enjoy the time we had to spend there. During the night we heard noises made by various wild animals, and the splash of crocodiles in the water; but fortunately no animal paid us a visit on the boat.

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The steamer was always tied up to the bank for the night soon after sunset, about six-thirty or seven o'clock, and we started again in the morning about five or six.

Directly the work of tying up the boat was completed, there was an exodus of all the natives. They infinitely preferred sleeping on the bank to remaining on the boat; and they set to work at once to make large fires, at which to cook their evening meal, and round which to gather for a good chat. Soon numbers of other natives joined them, and a curiously weird and picturesque sight it was to see them all squatting round their big fires, chattering as only natives can. Their voices never ceased all night, at least, whenever I woke up, I always heard them. At these festive gatherings the indispensable pipe played, of course, a great part. Men of all races and colour seem to derive great joy and comfort from smoking. These natives, evidently thinking they could not have too much of a good thing, carried a

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huge pipe with them, which, whenever we stopped, and they had time to thoroughly enjoy it, was always passed round, each taking a few whiffs. The stem of the pipe, and the bowl to hold water, were made of one of the curiously-shaped and long-stalked gourds, which they grow and use for so many purposes. A hole is made in the top part of the bowl and a small piece of bamboo firmly inserted, then a large clay bowl for the tobacco is fixed on to the bamboo. The tobacco is lighted with a bit of wood from the fire, and then they suck up the smoke through the water and the long stem. It is in fact a kind of 'hubble-bubble;' many of the clay bowls are well ornamented, and curious patterns are drawn on the stem and bowl of the gourd. I have one pipe whose clay bowl is five and a half inches in diameter and nineteen inches long. The stem measures twenty inches in length, while the bowl for water measures eighteen inches in circum-

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ference. It was the largest I saw in use, and I had considerable difficulty in persuading its owners to part with it, and even more difficulty in packing and bringing it safely home. It has adorned the wall of my room for more than six months, and it is more than twelve months since it has been used; but the odour of the tobacco still clings to it, and indeed pervades the room if it is shut up for a time.

We had been travelling for six days after leaving Chinde, going all the time through Portuguese territory, when one morning we spied a large notice board erected on the river bank, like a warning that 'trespassers will be prosecuted.' But this was not the sort of notice we found. We could make out the words painted in large letters upon it—'Here commences B. C. A. territory and reaches to' . . . we could not make out the rest, as the letters were worn or rubbed off. It was presumably thought unnecessary or

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**NATIVE GRAIN STORES.**

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imprudent at present to paint them in again, and to say how far British territory extends.

About there the land was very fairly cultivated. The natives had planted quantities of bananas and large patches of mealies and native corn near their villages. These villages were larger and more frequent than those we had hitherto seen; and, in addition to the huts for living in, there were always a number of huts for storing grain. These last were round in shape, and were built on piles to keep the corn safe from the rats, with which the country abounds.

The first British station that we came to was called Port Herald. Behind it is a fine range of mountains, on which there are said to be some large coffee plantations, which are doing extremely well. Port Herald itself is a well-laid-out place. Its straight roads have been planted on each side with trees, which cast a pleasant shade; and there are two or three neat-

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looking houses with well-thatched roofs and wide verandahs. Here the Europeans live; but most of the inhabitants of the place are Banyans, as the Indian traders are called. It seems to me a great pity to encourage so many of them to come and settle in B. C. A., as they are filling up the places wanted for our own surplus population. The Banyans can work for less money, and can live on considerably less than the ordinary white man. They have even fewer scruples as to correct weights and measures, and consequently can get on and flourish where a European would starve. The Banyans have already become a great difficulty in Durban, just as the Chinese have become in America; and surely, when we have so many difficulties to contend with in Africa, it is, to say the least, unwise to introduce another.

Two or three hours further up the river is Chiromo—a delightful station. The former consul took great pride in

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the place and laid it out exceedingly well. Of course, the roads were made perfectly straight and crossed each other at right angles. All had trees planted on each side for shade. A fine old baobab tree stands just at the end of the principal road, and is a very picturesque object. There are a good many houses for Europeans, and all stand well back from the roads and are surrounded by good gardens.

The consulate is a very pretty residence, with a charming view from the verandah overlooking the river Ruoh, which runs into the Shiré at Chiromo. It was a very lively house, as there were three or four British officials living there together. Indeed, all the inhabitants of Chiromo seemed to get on extremely well together, and to have a very good time. Many people might think there was a great drawback to their happiness on hearing that there was not a European lady in the place. Although deprived of the charm

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of their fellow-country-women's society, they were, they assured me, extremely happy. Still, they did not appear to object to a visit from a lady, just for a change, and they kindly asked me up to dinner, an invitation which I was very pleased to accept.

When I arrived at the consulate and was crossing the verandah, I was met by a cat flying for its life. Then I heard shouts of laughter. It seemed that I was the first European woman the cat had seen, and that she was terrified at the sight. But before I left we became good friends. I learnt from the consul that though a good many missionary ladies, both German and English, go up the river, I was the first lady who had been to call; indeed, I was the first Planet Pilgrim to travel that way. Somebody called me the 'first vagrant,' as I had no business to do and no connection with any work in that part. Of course, during dinner, I heard a number of lion

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tales; and the very night I arrived at Chiromo, a man was brought in having been terribly mauled by a lion, but owing to the good care the doctor took of him he recovered. The consul's immediate predecessor had had a delightful adventure. One evening he was walking home from the river in the dusk, when he saw something coming slowly along the path towards him. He politely stepped aside to allow it to pass, and as it did so he saw that it was a lion. For a moment he was too frightened to move. Then it occurred to him that he had better 'make tracks' for home, as the probability was that, after the lion had quenched his thirst at the river, he would wish for something to eat.

My hosts were much horrified at the idea of my going alone to Lake Tanganyika, and many and terrible were the consequences they foretold. They also made many kind and wonderful suggestions for the preservation of my

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health, and for keeping off the much-dreaded attacks of fever. Probably my immunity from fever was due to the fact that I did not adopt any of the suggestions. During my journey I was frequently asked, 'How many grains of quinine do you take daily?' and my questioners were much astonished to hear that I took no more than I should do at home, but followed the advice once given me by an old traveller, only to take quinine when I felt 'cheap.' Twice I thought I really was going to have an experience of fever, but on these occasions it was only that I was over-fatigued or suffering from a chill caused by the sudden change of temperature experienced in passing from the lake to the high land, for I was all right again next day.

I was in B. C. Africa from June until November, and I never once was stopped by illness, or had to give up any expedition I had planned. Of course, it

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was the healthiest time of the year, but a good many people were ill with fever during that time. From what I heard and saw, I feel sure there would be a great deal less fever if those whose lot it is to live out there would learn to be more careful of their health. They do things that would make them ill in any country, and then put it down to the climate. Of course, working so much in the sun causes fever, and also working in houses with those detestable corrugated iron roofs. Some of these have nothing under the roof to keep out the heat; but surely it is not right to expose yourself in either way.

Directors of companies at home might give more care and thought to the comfort and health of their agents and clerks out there; but their chief care seems to be about the dividends. I certainly did long to see a few directors of the luxurious sort popped down in one of the offices at Chiromo, when the thermometer was 116° in the shade, the

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sun pouring down on the iron roof, striking on the heads of those within, and making the chairs so hot that one could hardly sit on them. On the verandah, too, you had to sit with your sunshade up, or a wet cloth on your head, as that also had an iron roof. Imagine having to do brain work in such a heat. How soon the directors would have all this put right and made comfortable, even at the risk of having no dividend at all for a year or two, if they had to work under such conditions.

Another terrible bane is whisky drinking. Everyone knows what an immense amount of harm it does and how much fever it causes, yet nothing is done to stop it; while endless trouble and expense is incurred to find out other causes of fever.

My stay at Chiromo had been so interesting, and I had met with so much kindness, and had found so much amusement, that I was quite sorry when the 'Pious Paddler' was ready to continue



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her journey up the river; but I had the pleasure of thinking I should probably call there again on my way down, and in my turn have plenty of adventures to relate

After leaving Chiromo, the river was still very winding, and the views of the mountains in the Shiré Highlands were lovely. The sandbanks were getting more frequent, and, of course, we stuck many times, but never badly. I think we should have felt that the day was too monotonous if we had not had the excitement of striking on a sandbank. These incidents gave rise to very amusing scenes, and were always sufficiently varied to excite interest. Besides, there was always the possibility of getting firmly fixed.

At one of the villages near a place where we tied up for the night, the captain bought a quantity of fowl and Muscovy duck. I went with him to buy them, and was highly amused at the bargaining. Of course, it was a long business, as it always is in the East, and

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it resulted in his getting the fowls for twopence each and the ducks for five-pence. This seemed wonderfully cheap, but I found that it was quite a good price as markets go there, and the natives were glad to part with them for the price mentioned.

From Chiromo to Katunga was only two days' journey, and here the river part of the expedition ended.

## CHAPTER III

### OVERLAND—THE SHIRÉ—TO BLANTYRE.

KATUNGA is so called after the chief to whom that part of the country which surrounds the station belonged. Indeed, most places are named after chiefs, and many of the names have a very musical sound, and serve to recall some fact in the history of the country. Therefore it seems a pity that so many English and Scotch names are now being substituted when they have no meaning out there, and do not commemorate any special deed, either religious, civil or military.

Katunga is a curious and, in some ways, an interesting place. There is one large store with the buildings belonging to it, and all around, at the time of my visit, there was a confused mass of goods of

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every description, piled up just as they were left when unloaded from the river steamers—huge iron plates, parts of steamers, boilers, railway and telegraph stuff, and cases of every shape and size were all waiting to be carried off by the natives either up to Blantyre, a distance of about thirty miles, or to another station on the river at a place called Matope, some sixty miles off.

The Murchison Falls and Rapids are but a little way above Katunga, and of course they make it impossible for boats to go further. The river Shiré has here a drop of about twelve hundred feet in some thirty-five miles. Were it not for these rapids, the journey up from the coast to Lake Nyasa would be extremely simple, but not nearly so interesting.

It was almost dark when we arrived at Katunga, and I did not go on shore until next morning. I was not sorry to find I should have to stay until the following day, because all the natives about the

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station were employed in carrying loads, and, in order to have me and my luggage conveyed to Blantyre, others had to be sent for from the villages near.

Around Katunga there was plenty to see that was amusing and interesting.

For a long time I sat and watched the natives going off with their loads. A man sometimes carried as much as sixty pounds, though fifty-six pounds was the usual weight of a load for a single carrier. When the package was heavier, bamboo poles were fastened to it, and two or more men carried it. I was astonished to see how well they contrived to carry even very unwieldy things across the mountain. A good many of their loads consisted of the iron plates for the new gunboat, the 'Guendolen,' which was being built at Fort Johnston when I was there. These things were not only heavy, but they were also, owing to their shape, extremely

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difficult to carry. The angles of the plates were sharp and rough, and must have been exceedingly irksome when borne on bare shoulders. Yet they were wonderfully quiet and patient in going off with these awkward loads; but it was not a pleasant sight, and I was always glad when a load was such that they could put it on their heads, for, so placed, it seemed quite easy for them to manage it, and they always walked off with it quite cheerfully.

Here I saw several new styles of dressing the hair. One, which was very much in favour, was to have the tufts of hair twisted with wire or cotton, so that they stuck up in hard points all over the head. Some of the women had beads twisted in their hair, producing the effect of a bead fringe to a mat, which flopped and jingled as they ran.

On the following morning I was able to engage some men, and by eleven

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o'clock I was ready to start. The start was a most exciting and interesting performance, though just at first I was rather appalled at the array of wild-looking men. There were fourteen of them, twelve to carry me and two to carry my luggage, which weighed just sixty pounds, so that it was an easy load for two. I was to be carried in a machila, which is really a hammock made of strong sailcloth and slung on a bamboo pole. It was carried by two men, one at each end. Sometimes there is a cover all along the top of the pole, to make a shade, but as I found it interfered with the view, I only had curtains at the head, that I could draw or push back as I wished. A very important item in the make-up of the machila is the pillows. These, when well arranged, add greatly to the traveller's comfort. Much, too, depends on having them the right size and shape. I was miserably uncomfortable at first, but after a time

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I learnt how to ride with perfect ease; and next, after a Japanese jinrikisha, I consider machila travelling the most delightful mode of progression in a hot country.

Having inspected my conveyance, I proceeded to get in, but as I was not used to a hammock, when I got in on one side I promptly rolled out on the other. The boys shrieked with laughter and rushed to pick me up. Then when I tried again to get in, they formed up in a row on the off-side to prevent the possibility of a repetition of the accident. This time I succeeded in getting in, but my cushions were most uncomfortable, and I was afraid of moving much lest I should again roll out. Then, as the carriers got warm, the 'Bouquet d'Afrique' became almost unbearable, and when we came to the foot of the mountain I was thankful to get out and walk.

The men, when carrying the machila, go at a kind of trot, and travel at the



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rate of about four miles an hour. There is a wonderful difference in the way different men carry you. Some contrive to jolt most miserably, but, as a rule, they go very easily and change without stopping. In lifting the pole over their heads, just to change shoulders, they often give their heads an awful knock, but it does not trouble them, their skulls seem too thick for them to mind such a trifling blow.

The men who were carrying me were a happy lot, and sang and shouted at the top of their voices. The words of their songs were generally improvised about the 'Ulendo' (the journey), and the person they were carrying, and all the extraordinary things he or she had done or said. One man led off, a few more joined in, and they all ended up with a powerful chorus. Then, at intervals, without any provocation, they clapped the machila pole violently with their hands and uttered piercing shrieks and yells.

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The men whose turn it was next to carry the machila would run by the side, and when the time came for them to take their part, they just slipped their shoulders under the pole and the others retired to the back to rest and walk quietly.

The road to Blantyre is called the Sclater road, after the man who made it, and it is a wonderfully good one. The first part out from Katunga was planted on both sides with limes, lemons and oranges. There was a good deal of fruit on some of the trees, and the scent was delicious. I often wished they had been continued further along the road. For some distance the way was very level and kept to the plain. By-and-by we came to the foot of the mountain, and there I got out and walked, as the ascent was very steep. The road went up in long zig-zags, while the native paths took short cuts, and as they were more in the shade of the trees, I preferred going up them, stopping often to enjoy the lovely

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view over the plain, along which we could see the river Shiré winding for a great distance. In this way it took us nearly an hour to reach the top of the Pass. Then, as the men wanted to go more quickly, I got into the machila again; but before we got to a kind of rest-house at 'Mbami, half-way to Blantyre, I had another hour's walk and climb. It was half-past two o'clock when I arrived at 'Mbami. At this rest-house I found a native who could speak a few words of English, and what was even a greater joy, he knew how to make tea, and had a tin of nice biscuits. The men were glad of a rest, and we remained about an hour before we set off again.

We journeyed on and on, the sun set, and I began to feel rather anxious. I was getting tired, and of course could not speak to the men to find out how much further we had to go, so I had to cultivate patience, and trust we should soon get to the end of our journey.

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Fortunately there was a lovely moon to light us, and the men relieved the monotony of the journey by their singing, shouting and funny antics.

At last, about half-past seven, we stopped. All that I could discern were some high gates, a wall and a round tower. The men made signs for me to get out of the machila, which I did, though very much puzzled as to the place, which seemed to me to be a prison. After some hammering at the doors, a native inside came and unlocked and unbarred them, had a long confabulation with my men, and finally let us all in. We found ourselves in a large open space with buildings all round. I discovered at last that we had reached Blantyre, and that this place belonged to the African Lakes Company. Their stores and offices were built round this large square in order to afford protection and defence against the natives in case of a rising, and also to serve as a laager for the Europeans of the neighbourhood.

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The manager's house was at one end, and there I received a very kind welcome, and an invitation to stay. The house was a grand one, for that part of the world; it was two storeys high, which is most unusual, and it had a splendid verandah all round. It is called 'Mandala,' the native word for glasses. The builder and first occupier of the house wore glasses, and of course it was named after him, as the natives have their own names, taken from some peculiarity, for all Europeans and for European things.

When I went up to my room I found a large white owl in possession. The natives, who are very superstitious, were horrified, as they consider them very unlucky. Fortunately, they have a firm belief that owls cannot be killed, so they do not attempt to destroy them. A curious thing happened once to confirm that belief. A European raised his gun and aimed at an owl, the natives said they were certain he could not shoot it, and sure enough something had

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happened to the gun and it declined to go off. Of course, before it could be put right, the owl had quietly flown away.

I was told here, that another creature of which the natives have a great horror is the chameleon, but of those they kill all they can find. They say the chameleon and the lizard were sent into the world as messengers of life and death. The lizard went off at a great rate, but the chameleon loitered on the way, and when he arrived he found the lizard had been on the earth for some time and had instituted Death, and therefore, because of his laziness, the natives destroy all the chameleons they come across.

Blantyre is cool, and should be healthy. It is three thousand feet above the sea, and the air was quite bracing after the heat of the plains. The scenery round is good, and there are some lovely mountains, which are four to five thousand feet in height, as well as numerous hills of less altitude. It is a curiously-arranged place, and each



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hill seems to have its own settlement. Mandala is on one, the mission station on another, the civil Boma, with the post and telegraph offices, on a third. 'Boma' is the native word for stockade, and as there is always one round the collector's house, the 'seat of government' has acquired the name of 'Boma.' On yet another hill is the hospital, which did not appear to be much used, despite its many comforts and lovely situation. The reason for this seems to be, that people prefer being nursed in their own homes whenever that is possible. Certainly the advent of trained nurses in that part of the world has been an immense blessing, and now that several have been sent out by the missions and the government, who are at liberty to go to the homes of the patients, there are many more recoveries from bad attacks of fever than formerly. In old days there was very little chance of recovery for anyone down with fever, who was left only to the care of the natives. These, though anxious to do their

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best, knew very little of the wants of Europeans. Doctors, too, were fewer in number, and were extremely difficult to get at. They often arrived too late to be of use, as the distances are so great.

It was Livingstone's idea to found a Scotch colony in the Shiré Highlands, and after his death this was done, and it has been named Blantyre, after his birthplace. The inhabitants, apart from the natives, are almost entirely Scotch; and, indeed, the whole way from Chinde to Lake Tanganyika, you meet Scotchmen, and nearly everyone's name begins with 'Mac.' All kinds of things seem to flourish about Blantyre, roses and many other home flowers, wheat, maize, rice, potatoes, sugar-cane, tobacco, and, of course, coffee. There are many large coffee plantations doing extremely well. The first plant was brought over from the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens, and was planted in the Blantyre Mission garden, where it flourished for many years, and is the parent of all the plantations.



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Nyasaland coffee commands the best price in the London market, and is certainly most excellent in flavour ; but, unfortunately, I seldom had the pleasure of tasting it in Nyasaland, owing to the trouble of roasting and grinding it. Tea is so much more easily made, that you get a great deal more of it.

The coffee plantations were very interesting to go through, and they were a very pretty sight, for when I was there, at the end of July, the bushes were loaded with the bright red fruit, and the natives were all busy picking it into baskets. After seeing the picking, we followed the berries to the pulpers and saw the soft outer covering taken off, and then watched all the various processes, till finally we saw some of the coffee put in sacks ready to be shipped off to England. Certainly it appeared to me to be the finest coffee I had ever seen, and I have seen coffee growing in many countries.

Another day I went to see a tobacco plantation. There is, of course, plenty of

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tobacco used in B. C. Africa, and as the plant seems to flourish well, the growing of it ought to be a paying industry. I was astonished to see the number of processes the leaf has to go through before it is ready for smoking.

A visit to the mission took up another and a most interesting day, as there were so many kinds of work going on. Of course, it is quite an old settlement. Having been started, I believe, in 1875, everything is well established, and the work goes on regularly and well. The church is a wonderful building. It would attract attention and admiration anywhere, but seen in a part of the world that at home we consider far away from all civilisation, it excites amazement. It took about three years to build, and is entirely native work. The missionary was the architect, the natives made and laid the bricks, and did all the wood-carving and ornamentation. The design of the church is most elaborate; it has towers and domes, and a circular

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east end with good stained glass. In the nave there are two stained windows. The glass, of course, has come from home. The pulpit is of native wood well carved, and there is a good deal of carving about the doors. The church stands in a large, open square, and there is a beautiful avenue of eucalyptus trees, nearly a mile long, leading up to it. The trees are from sixty to a hundred feet high, and were planted in 1879.

Near the church are good schools. In addition to the ordinary school instruction, carpentering, printing, gardening, etc., are taught to the boys, and needlework, laundry, dairy and housework to the girls. All this instruction makes them very useful servants for us; but I sometimes wondered how much is for ourselves and how much is honestly and solely for the good of the natives. We are certainly creating in the native a desire, and even greed, for money, and with that a wish for finery and clothing such as they had not before, and that certainly is not for their good. They look

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far better and are healthier with only their nsaru, or loin cloth, made of native cloth, or even of the poor calico we send out to them, than when wearing old soldiers' coats, and the shabby things they are tempted to buy at the stores—clumsy boots that deform their feet and make them walk badly, and horrid old hats stuck on their heads. They never wore hats formerly, and the sun is no hotter now, so that they cannot be necessary, and are certainly dirty and untidy. Moreover, if we are teaching them many of our own industries, they are forgetting their own. The native iron and copper work was excellent, and their axes, hoes, spears and knives were all beautifully made and ornamented. All the things they use were carved, or had brass, copper or iron wire tastefully twisted round them. The gourds for drinking were adorned with all kinds of quaint designs, and their ntangas, or baskets for holding their possessions, were much prettier than the ugly boxes in which we keep ours. They had

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decidedly an idea of making their things tasteful as well as useful, and of course had plenty of time to spend on decoration. The native weaving and the bead-work, too, is dying out as, now money is earned, all these things can be obtained more cheaply at the stores. Architecturally, we are not improving the look of the country. Red brick houses are certainly not pretty ; while the Wankonde huts at the north end of Lake Nyasa are most picturesque and beautifully clean and neat. They have a framework of bamboo, then clay pressed into different shapes is placed in patterns between the bamboo, or sometimes the bamboo is plaited in patterns and the clay is plastered on inside. Then with a good thatch, and provided with well overhanging eaves, they have a delightfully cool house and a very pretty one. If the difficulty is that the huts are not roomy enough, surely it cannot be difficult to teach the natives to make them larger and with better accommodation. It seems a pity we cannot

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develop and improve all the good in the natives without having to teach them all our own fads and customs, many of which have certainly not proved entirely satisfactory at home. We English are an odd mixture, we send out large sums for missions, and then permit and encourage such a show in London as 'Savage Africa,' which must thoroughly demoralise the natives, and undo years of patient work. It would be curious to know what the natives think of a nation that goes in crowds to see a representation of such a terribly sad incident as 'Wilson's last stand,' in which possibly some of the very same natives who took part in the slaughter are being employed to act it over again, just for the amusement of Wilson's countrymen. It surely will be counted one of the disgraces of the nineteenth century that such a show was permitted and supported. It is most earnestly to be hoped that no more shows of the same kind will ever be allowed. The great hold we have over the natives in Africa is on

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account of the respect, and almost awe, they have for the white man, and their belief in his superiority ; but such shows must lessen their respect for us, and do incalculable harm.

## CHAPTER IV

### BLANTYRE TO LIWONDE

AFTER spending some days in Blantyre, I started off in my machila, with seventeen boys, to see something of the surrounding country. I had again two boys for my baggage, but this time I took fourteen to carry the machila, as I was going longer distances. Of course, there was a 'capitao,' as the head man is called, to look after the others. He generally walked along in a most dignified manner, carrying a quite useless gun. Each of the others carried a spear, a small axe and a knobkerry—a stick with a heavy knob at the end, which is useful in helping to support the load on their shoulder. It is also used as a weapon, and with it the native can give a deadly blow. They were a picturesque-looking crew, with



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their cat-skin bags filled with food and slung on their arms, and looking like stuffed animals.

The skins of some wild cats are very handsome. When they have killed the cat, the natives just cut off the head, and then literally 'let the cat out of the bag.' The inside of the skin is then rubbed with stones to get it clean, and is afterwards dried in the sun. It is next turned with the fur outside again, and it makes a perfect bag, never having been cut anywhere, except at the neck. The legs make useful and separate pockets for snuff, of which the natives take a great deal, and for tobacco, etc.

The men's clothing consisted of a loin cloth, and plenty of necklaces, armlets, and anklets, made of beads and twisted copper and brass wire. Their hair was trimmed, of course, in all sorts of amusing fashions; and their bodies were well rubbed with oil, which shone in the sun, and polished up the colour of their skins, which is a dark chocolate. They were happy and noisy,

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just like a lot of children, and seemed to be as easily amused.

My destination that day was Zomba, which was forty-two miles off; too far to travel comfortably in one day. As I did not want to camp on the way, a relay of men had been sent on the night before to relieve the others when we got about half-way, and enable them to return home. I started about seven a.m., and did not reach Zomba till nearly seven p.m. Of course, we often stopped for a rest, and I did a good deal of walking, which is not such a quick way of getting on as being carried; but I got so tired of riding in the machila, that I was glad to get out and walk occasionally, by way of a change. It was rather disconcerting to be unable to speak to my carriers, but they were uncommonly clever at making themselves understood by signs, and as no difficulties arose on the way, there was no real necessity to talk to them.

The only mishap was the loss of my mid-day meal. I was to have stopped at a coffee

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planter's on the way, but I could not discover where he lived. Either the boys did not know, or they did not wish to stop there, and I arrived at Zomba very hungry and tired. One is made wise by experience, and after that day I always carried a small stock of biscuits, and a bottle of tea, in the machila with me. The road was a very good one all the way from Blantyre to Zomba, though it was rather hilly ; but a bicycle could easily go along it. There was a great deal of the usual scrubby kind of forest ; the trees, of course, looked worse at that time of the year, as many had no leaves on them.

At last I reached Zomba, and was surprised to find it such a remarkably civilised place. I had known that it was the Seat of Government, but at home one thinks of everyone in B. C. Africa as struggling with hardships, so that I was quite unprepared to find so much of comfort, and almost luxury, as I did here.

It is prettily situated at the foot of a high mountain of the same name, which

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overlooks a big plain, with Lake Shirwa in the middle, and the mountains of Mlanje in the distance. The residency is a fine building, and has beautifully laid-out grounds ; but the interior of the house had a rather forlorn appearance. The place is not considered very healthy, and a new residency is to be built in a better situation. The Government and post and telegraph offices are close by ; and, dotted about among the trees on the hillside, are pretty one-storied houses occupied by the European residents. There is a good store belonging to the A. L. C., where all ordinary wants can be supplied, a large tennis ground, that seems to be well used, and a military station, where about three hundred natives were, at this time, being drilled.

When I was at Zomba, there were only four ladies living there, two married ladies and the two Government nurses. They were all made much of, and seemed to be having a thoroughly good time, indeed the whole settlement struck me as being a very

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happy one. It was amusing to hear of the fuss that was made over the 'Zomba baby,' the first white child born in that part of the world. It was just a year old, and, a few days before I arrived there, had held a grand reception on its birthday. Everyone called on it, and the amount of cake eaten on that occasion was considered responsible for all the illness for some time after.

Zomba mountain is a lovely place, and puts thoughts of picnics into one's mind. The plateau on the top ought to be a grand 'health resort' for the people living on the plains, when the heat there becomes too intense. It is about four thousand feet high, and we found the ascent long and steep. The views obtained on the way up were glorious; and as the friends who went with me up the mountain had arranged to start early, there was plenty of time to enjoy the climb and the prospect before the heat became too great. From the top, you look over a large, well-wooded plain, with Lake Shirwa in the centre, the Mlanje mountains

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opposite, and Mount Chiradzulu on one side.

July is not the best month for the flowers, but we found a great variety, and some of very brilliant colours. The ferns, too, were splendid, especially those near the streams. The top of the mountain is charming country, where one can walk for miles, up and down hills, across streams and up mountains almost as high as Zomba itself. In one place we came upon a lovely waterfall, where the water dashed over great ledges of granite, and here we found large patches of osmunda, maidenhair, and other varieties of fern. Many of the trees were flat-topped—the kind one sees so often in Central and South-East Africa. Game seemed abundant. We saw a good many bok in the distance, and the boys showed us the spoor of wild cats, leopards, etc. We boiled our kettle and had tea by a lovely stream, and felt very loath to leave the plateau and go down again to the plain. In descending the mountain the

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views were even more lovely, as a slight haze made the light softer and the colouring more beautiful.

When I left Zomba I went on to Domasi, another Scotch mission station, only two hours and a half distant. My boys left the road and took me by native paths, going round to the other side of Mount Zomba, which is totally different, and very much finer—a precipice of grey rock.

The first view of Domasi is very pretty. The mission buildings are all thatched, the church has a deep red roof, and the wooded mountains and grey rocks at the back formed a charming picture. Here again I received a most kindly welcome, and much enjoyed a stay of a day or two ; though the manse is, without exception, the most draughty place I ever was in. The rooms are large and lofty, no door or window fits, and there are brick floors. This all sounds as if it ought to be delightful in British Central Africa. But Domasi stands high, and it happened to

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be very cold weather, 'exceptionally cold,' of course. I had just come up from the heat of the plains, and most heartily wished I had brought warmer clothing with me. The natives seemed to feel the cold very much too, and went about in the early morning well wrapped up in their arms, which is their method of keeping themselves warm. They cross their arms in front, and clutch their shoulders with their hands.

There was a funny little native boy about the manse. He was only four years old, and was found two years ago by Colonel Manning during some fighting up country. He was the only living creature left in a native village, and he had two bad wounds, one of them on his head. The child was brought to the manse, to be taken care of, and of course has been made a great pet, and is becoming a sharp, amusing little lad.

Many of the native women round Domasi wear 'Pedeles' in their upper lip, making



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it stick out like a pig's snout. The largest one I saw there was of solid ivory, two inches long, and three and a half inches in circumference. A slit is cut in the upper lip, just under the nose, and a piece of wood or ivory is inserted to prevent it healing, then gradually larger and larger pieces are put in till they reach the fashionable size. Further up country I got a very large and queer one ; it was of tin, hollow like a dish, and was five inches in circumference and rather more than one inch deep. It was quite the most ugly 'ornament' I have ever seen. It puzzled me to understand how the women talked and ate with such decorations in their lips, but apparently use was second nature, for it was only when the 'Pelele' was taken out that they experienced a difficulty in talking. The two women whom I persuaded, by liberal offers of beads and salt, to let me have the very large ones they were wearing, had to get thick pieces of wood to put in at once when they took the others out. The

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younger women are not following this fashion, but as they must have some ornament, they put a thick piece of lead or ivory in one side of the nose. In the lobe of each ear they wear large discs, the size of a five-shilling piece, made of ivory or wood ornamented with brass nails. Sometimes, in addition, the whole ear is studded round with brass or ivory. The men, too, do not disdain to wear large and solid pieces of ivory or wood in the lobes of their ears, and sometimes the large hole thus made is found useful to carry other things, such as snuff boxes, or trifles of that sort.

The faces and bodies of both men and women are often tattooed in wonderful patterns, and they always have a tribal mark. The tattooing in B. C. A. is done quite differently from the way it is done in Japan, and from the way our sailors do it. The patterns are formed by means of raised lumps. These are made on the skin by cutting it, and rubbing something

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in to raise it up. This is done on the face or any part of the body, in all sorts of patterns, and sometimes in rows of wonderfully straight parallel lines.

I noticed, too, that there were many fashions in teeth. Teeth do not seem to lend themselves to fashion's caprices, but the natives have discovered the possibility of considerably altering their appearance. Some have all of them filed to points, looking like the teeth of a saw ; others have the upper front teeth notched, and some have the two front teeth taken out. Of course, all this may have been the result of other motives than a desire to become 'advantageously varied,' but I could not discover them.

Many of the women adorned themselves wonderfully, and looked very gay and picturesque. Round their heads they wore a band of beadwork, beautifully made, loads of bead necklaces adorned their necks, bead arrangements swathed their waists, and on arms and ankles they wore a

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number of copper, iron and brass bangles. I much admired the colour of their skin. It is a rich chocolate, and, when well kept, has a beautifully clear, smooth look, almost like satin. Out in Africa it looks infinitely handsomer than the yellowish white skin of the Europeans; for out there, a really lovely English complexion is not to be found, and 'white' people are usually either red, yellow or brown; shades which certainly do not harmonise as well with the surroundings as does the native colour.

The making of these bead ornaments was an interesting process to watch; it was almost as intricate as lace-making. The women make the cotton they use as thread. They have no needles, but make a fine point to the cotton and thread each bead separately; most of the patterns they invent themselves, but they are delighted to be shown new ones.

From Domasi I went to see a coffee plantation at Songani. It seemed to me a rather amusing proceeding to take my

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machila and my seventeen men about with me wherever I went. At first I was troubled as to what would become of them when I stayed a few days at a station; but I found it was the custom, and no one objected to my arriving with that number of men, and the men themselves were perfectly content and happy. They always took themselves off to the nearest native village, and waited with the most absolute indifference just as long as I wished. It was perfectly delightful to meet with beings who had so much spare time.

As we approached Songani, the men gave ample warning of our arrival, and, for fully a quarter of an hour before reaching the house, they began to sing at the top of their voices, then they gave vent to yells, shrieks and every imaginable sort of noise. I tried to make them be quiet. I saw it was a nice house we were coming to, and I felt terribly ashamed to arrive in such a fashion with such a horde of

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lunatics, but my efforts to make them quieter were, I think, construed into approval of the noise, and only incited them to greater exertions. When my hostess came out to welcome me, I immediately poured forth my apologies, but she only laughed, and said that it was the custom, and they rather liked it, as it let them know that friends were coming, and also showed that the men were happy and getting on well.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Son-gani. The house was extremely picturesque. Its broad verandah, with its tempting lounging chairs and pleasant shade, gave it an air of comfort. The garden was bright with flowers, and beyond was the steep granite side of Mount Zomba. The road up to the house led through a large nursery of young coffee plants, all looking strong and healthy, and the ground was so beautifully kept, that there was not a weed to be seen. When, after a rest, I went

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round the estate, I found the large coffee plantations equally well cared for ; and, indeed, the whole place was so wonderfully neat, that it was difficult to believe one was in Africa.

During my stay there we went for a walk through two of the adjacent native villages, and watched the women pounding corn in tall mortars made of wood. They use a long, heavy pole, about six feet long and four inches thick, to pound with. Two women pound at the same time, and they lift the poles with such regularity that, though the mortar is very narrow, they seldom clash. When the pounding is done, they crush the corn quite fine, by rubbing it between two stones, one small stone over another big flat one. This sometimes makes the flour very gritty, as the stones are often not very hard, and a good deal gets rubbed off into the flour.

While I was at Songani, the natives came in with balls of rubber for sale.

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They collect it from a kind of vine that grows wild in Nyasaland; they cut the rind of the vine in places, and as the juice oozes out, they smear it over their hands, arms and bodies. Then, on their way home, when it has set a little, they roll it off into balls.

From Songani I started off to reach the river again at Liwonde. There was, I believe, a good road most of the way, but the natives preferred the paths, and I was very pleased when they turned off the road. Then the way became much more interesting, though at times it was terribly rough. I had constantly to get out and walk; and many times when I was riding I found why it was necessary to have the hammock made of strong sail cloth instead of netting, for the machila caught on the tops of thorn bushes, stumps roughly chopped off, and sharp rocks sticking up by the pathways. A native path is said to go as direct as possible from one village to another,



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but the windings and turnings, to avoid a stone or a fallen tree, are endless, and I am sure increase the distance at least one mile in four. Still, I thought it pleasanter and more amusing than going straight on, and time was no object to me or my boys.

The path through the high grass and thorn bushes was only wide enough for a native, and while traversing it, I had to take great care to avoid a creeping-plant called the 'Cowitch,' the proper name of which is, I believe, the macuna bean. It has bunches of pods, which look like lovely old-gold plush, but the 'plush' consists of tiny spines, which, if you touch them, cause a terrible irritation, that drives you nearly frantic with pain. The only relief seems to come from getting into water, and that is not always at hand. The thorns, too, were very bad, many of them being from four to four and a half inches long, and the grass was higher than my head.

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We crossed several streams, sometimes on queer bridges made of bamboo, but more often on a pole thrown across, and much more suited to an acrobat than to me. The boys seemed thoroughly to enjoy the fun of getting me over, and and never once let me tumble.

As we went along, I had noticed a good deal of smoke, which I knew came from a big grass fire. I rather wondered if we should get caught in it, but the boys went on, so I supposed it was all right. Presently, however, I heard the curious crackling sound of the fire, and a sudden turn brought us into full view of it. On both sides of the path the flames were blazing up as high as the trees, and coming towards us. The boys ran back with me to where the path was wider, and the grass not so high, then they each got a stick, and we waited till the fire came nearer and there seemed a good chance of getting through. As we waited we saw hares flying for their lives, and

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poor beetles and frogs scurrying along in hope of escape. Then four of the boys seized the machila and simply flew through the burning grass, while the others on each side beat the flames back as well as they could. How they escaped getting badly burned was a marvel. I was very thankful when we were through, for the heat and smoke were stifling, and I was well covered with bits of burnt grass. For a long distance the heat from the smouldering wood was very great.

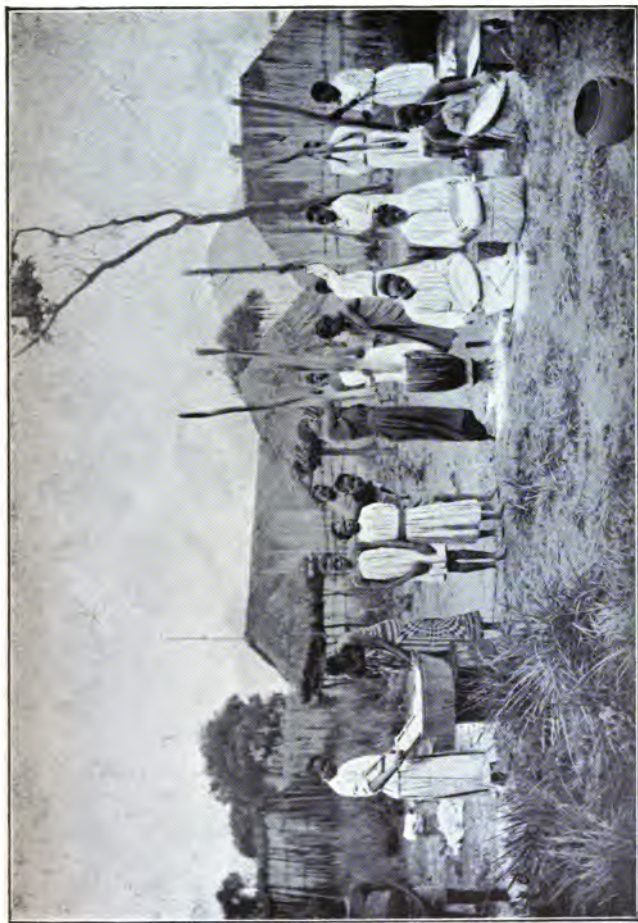
As we got nearer to the river, we saw again a great many of the large, strange-looking baobab trees, then the river came in sight, and, to my astonishment, I found the station was on the other side. I was wondering how the crossing would be accomplished, when the 'Collector' caught sight of me, and most kindly came across in his canoe to fetch me. The boys and the machila went over in native 'dug-outs.' Then, as I intended going further up the river to Lake Nyasa, I had to part with

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my cheery team of boys, and they went off, rejoicing greatly over the few yards of calico which I gave them in addition to their pay.

I had timed my arrival at Liwonde on the day on which I had been told the river steamer, the 'Livingstone,' would be waiting for me, but there was no sign of it, and it did not arrive until two days later. Things are, of course, very casual in that part of the world, and the only possible way to have any happiness is just to take things as they come, and forget such evil habits as keeping appointments, or fixing times for anything.

While waiting I always found plenty of amusement in strolling about a village and watching the women employed at their beadwork, or in sifting corn—work which they do with great quickness and much grace of movement. They shake the corn in an open basket, and as the coarse grains come to the top, they send them out with a little toss on the mat below. It looked such an easy process, that, to their great



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amusement, I had a try, but of course I could not manage it at all. However, before I left Africa, I was able, after repeated trials, to do it after a fashion.

## CHAPTER V

### VOYAGE ON THE 'LIVINGSTONE' AND 'DOMIRA'

WHEN at last the 'Livingstone' arrived at Liwonde, it had on board so many people who were going up to various stations, that I was thankful I had not to spend a night on the steamer. We started from Liwonde at seven a.m., and at eight p.m. we reached Fort Johnston, which is within a few miles of the point where the river leaves the lake. The journey had been a very pleasant one. All our meals were served on the upper deck, and there was the usual excitement of seeing hippos and crocs, of stoppages at 'wooding' stations, and of visits to native villages. It was the season for gathering the castor-oil berries, and many of the natives were busy drying and crushing them, in order to extract the oil, which



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they appear to make use of in a great variety of ways. They apply it both externally and internally. It puts a splendid gloss on their skin, but it has a decidedly unpleasant odour.

We crossed Lake Pa-Mlombe, which is supposed to have been formerly part of Lake Nyasa, and to have been divided from it by the silting-up of the sand, which has in this manner formed a separate lake. Lake Pa-Mlombe has nothing of the picturesque about it; it is about twelve or fifteen miles long and ten to twelve broad. The water is of a dirty colour, and carried a great deal of mud and sand in solution; while the navigation appeared to be very difficult, owing to its shallowness.

As it was quite dark when we got to Fort Johnston, I could see nothing of the place that evening. Next morning, however, I had a good look round, and was astonished to see what a large and well-arranged station it was. The whole place

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has only quite lately been planned and laid out. The old Fort Johnston was nearer the lake, in a low-lying spot. The ground round it was very swampy, and in consequence of its unhealthiness, arising from this fact, had to be abandoned, and a site for a new station selected in a more sanitary locality. Accordingly the new station is in a much better position, which is raised above the river, and commands a lovely view of the wooded mountains opposite. It made the place look quite gay and pretty when several of the lake and river steamers and the gunboats happened to be anchored opposite the station at the same time. The new gunboat for Lake Nyasa, the 'Guendolen,' was being built while I was there. She was the first boat to be built on a proper 'slip,' and the noise made by the workmen hammering on the iron plates reminded one of the Clyde.

There are people who say it was a serious mistake to build Fort Johnston in

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its present position. They say it should have been built on the lake instead of nearly five miles down the river, because, in the dry season, the bar is often impassable for the lake steamers. The consequence of this is, that, in dry seasons, the cargo has to be sent up and down in barges, with the result that unnecessary expense, trouble and delay is caused. Also, they complain that it is not on the line of the proposed railway; and their last, but most important objection is, that it is unhealthy. Poor Fort Johnston! If all these complaints are well founded, there is probably another move in prospect for it.

There are a number of government officials living at Fort Johnston, and the commander was lucky enough to have his wife out with him. This made a wonderful difference to the social life of the place. If others would follow his example, and bring their wives out too, it would certainly make an immense and much-to-be-desired social improvement; though,

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possibly, it might not be the happy lot of everyone to have a wife who would so thoroughly enjoy the life out there, and manage everything so well as the commander's wife. I was sorry when, having spent nine delightful days, the lake steamer, 'Domira,' arrived, and bore me off. But I was made happy by the thought that I should have to call there again on my return to the coast.

The 'Domira' was a curious little steamer of about eighty tons. Its highest part was the middle, and it looked very much like an old 'Noah's Ark.' Down below was a tiny cabin with two bunks. It was just like a cupboard with two shelves. This cabin was allotted to me, and, of course, I called it my 'State Room.' The rest of the space below was intended for a saloon, but part of it was curtained off to make extra separate sleeping places when wanted; and when the boat was full, mattresses were laid on the rest of the floor. We had our meals on the upper deck. The

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first two days it was impossible to move about on deck, as there were ten passengers, and we could hardly find room for our chairs in addition to the table. This state of things, however, only lasted two days; the rest of the way there were only two passengers besides myself. The lower deck for'ard, where the engines, the galley and the crew were, was covered with steel, and was so hot and slippery, that I wondered there were no accidents to the men when going backwards and forwards, and sometimes carrying awkward loads.

The 'Domira' turned out to be a much better boat than she looked, and she was uncommonly plucky in a storm. She had an excellent captain, a kind and amusing man, who contributed a great deal to my entertainment. He told me much about the natives and their ways, and, what was very useful to me afterwards, he taught me many of their words.

On our way up Lake Nyasa we saw the

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old 'Ilala' lying up for repairs. She is a tiny little steamer, no bigger than a steam-launch, and was the first European steam-boat that was ever on Lake Nyasa. She was brought out from England in pieces, and put together there, and the natives were intensely astonished to see her go along without rowers. They could not understand how such a thing was possible; but they have now become quite accustomed to the sight of steamers, and they very much enjoy going on one. Just after we had crossed the bar, and got into the lake, a large barge came alongside with about a hundred natives, who wanted to be taken on board. They had been down to the south end of the lake to do some work, in order to earn money to pay their hut tax, and they were now going back home. The 'Domira' reminded me still more of Noah's Ark when the natives were all climbing up the side and packing themselves in.

I had a great shock the first night,

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when, on taking possession of my 'state room,' I found that I would have to share it with an enormous number of cockroaches. They were the largest I had ever seen, and the most voracious. Some of them greedily ate all the kid off my shoes, while others, who were not so engaged, ran races over my bunk and nibbled my hair. The next night I had a mosquito curtain put up and tucked well in. It kept me safe from the cockroaches, but it made the bunk very hot and stuffy. It was a choice of evils, and the heat was the lesser one.

The day after we left Fort Johnston we stopped at Monkey Bay, a lovely 'wooding' station, with splendid granite rocks coming down on either side to the water, and behind them wooded mountains inhabited by numbers of monkeys. We made a stay of two or three hours here, while the crew were engaged in taking wood on board, and this gave me an opportunity of having a good walk round.

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The captain had told me of a curious native burial ground a little distance away from the bay, and after some searching I found it. There were small grass huts put up near to the graves, on which were baskets and pots of food, and several broken pots and gourds. I was told afterwards by someone who had lived for some time in Nyasaland, that the little grass huts were for the spirits of the deceased, and that they might be consulted there, and would receive gifts. The natives have a kind of ancestor worship, and always offer food and presents to the spirits of their dead relatives who, they believe, can help them on special occasions. They also believe in many spirits, good and evil, which they imagine inhabit air, earth and water. These they propitiate from time to time with offerings of food and drink. When anyone dies, all his cooking utensils, water-pots and calabashes are put in or on the grave after having been broken, or 'killed,' as they



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call it. An official once asked a native why he put such offerings of food and drink on the grave, adding, 'You know the dead cannot eat or see these things.' The native gave the excellent answer, 'Of course, we know they do not eat them, but even you don't know that they cannot see them, and are not pleased at finding that we still think of them.'

I was in the country too short a time to learn much for myself of their religious customs and observances; but, of course, I heard a great deal about the witch doctors and the 'Mfiti,' which last seems to be an evil spirit that takes possession of some man in a village or tribe, and makes him work all kinds of evil. When trouble arises in a village, it is the witch doctor's business to discover the man who has caused it. Generally two people are accused, and they have to go through the ordeal of drinking poisonous Mwavi. If the poison acts as an emetic they are innocent, but if either dies there is great

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rejoicing, because they think the evil spirit has been discovered and driven away. In some cases fowls are chosen to represent the suspected people, and the Mwavi is administered to them instead. If a native has only a headache, he thinks one of his ancestors is angry with him for something that he has done. Accordingly he makes an offering. But he does not confide only in their assistance. He resorts to the very human and primitive plan of tightly binding his aching head with a piece of cloth or rag.

Domira Bay was our next stopping-place, and there seven of the passengers landed. The shore here was very flat and swampy, and all of them had to be carried by natives from the boats to the dry land. This method of landing resulted in a rather amusing procession, in which, after a time, I had to take part. The natives always carried me on their shoulders, and I found it by no means easy to keep my balance, with nothing to hold on to, while my

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bearer floundered about through the water on very uneven ground. While on the 'Domira,' a splendidly big, strong fellow carried me, and brought me safely to the shore and boat each time I landed, but I often 'had my doubts' on the way. The natives always carried the male passengers 'pick-a-back,' which was a much easier and more secure way of crossing the water, but was not as dignified as riding on the shoulder.

We reached Kota-Kota at dusk, and I did not go on shore till the next morning. When I did land, I had a very enjoyable time. The shore is low and uninteresting, but this is compensated for by the large number of trees, and the beautifully green appearance which their foliage gives to the place. The collector is very particular about the trees, and does not allow them to be cut down or destroyed. Formerly Kota-Kota used to be a great stronghold of the Arabs, and had an enormous population. Though the

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population has greatly diminished, a sort of census that has lately been taken shows that it still numbers 8700. Jumbe used to be the great chief of that part, and his widow still lives there. She is delighted to receive a call from any visitor, and is a fine-looking woman, with brilliant eyes and beautifully white teeth. I asked the collector, who kindly went with me to visit her, to tell her how much I admired them. She was greatly pleased at the expression of my admiration, and replied that, as regards the teeth, the English, even at her age, would have quite as beautiful ones if they would not eat their food so hot. She showed me all her silver and ivory ornaments, some of which were very handsome. She wore a good many of them on her neck, wrists and ankles. She had several women in attendance, and they, too, wore many ornaments, and had their ears studded all round with ivory. When I left, she and her women accompanied me as far as the

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gate of the stockade which surrounded the compound, in which was her own spacious hut, and the huts of her attendants.

At Kota-Kota the Universities' Mission has a station. Having an impression that a university mission must show signs of its superiority, I was much disappointed at seeing the uncomfortable and untidy way in which the missionaries live there. The house looked wretched, and its want of neatness could not be a good example to the natives. The health of the missionaries must, I am sure, suffer from living under such depressing conditions. The church, on the other hand, was very prettily built in native style. It had a thatched roof, and its rafters were made of the ribs of the palm. Its walls were of mud and wattle, with a dado of mud inlaid with bits of quartz, which looked like bright mosaic, and the floor was spread with mats for the natives to squat on. New schools are being built, and when they are finished a new mission-house will probably be erected,

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and a chance given to the missionaries of taking better care of their health.

At Bandawe—another mission station on the lake—the inhabitants were greatly puzzled when they saw a lady coming ashore, and wondered to what mission I belonged. Then when I had landed, and they heard that I did not belong to any mission, but was only travelling for pleasure, they seemed to look upon me as a lunatic, and were thankful I was harmless.

Bandawe is a very pretty place, but is said to be very unhealthy. It has a long stretch of sandy beach, and, in one place, a rocky point juts out into the lake; also, there are rocky islands near the shore. It took me about ten minutes to walk from the landing-place up to the station. The dispensary was the first building I came to. This has, in addition to the dispensing room, three rooms for native patients. A little further on was the house of one of the missionaries, then the doctor's house, and, last in the row, the house of the

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head missionary. All were good houses, with well-thatched roofs and wide verandahs. Their front view is on to lovely mountains, which stretch beyond the forest far into the distance, and their back and side views are towards the lake, which looked just like the sea. Its water was a deep blue, almost indigo in colour, and it had waves which came splashing on to the rocks and sandy beach. It was very lovely, and looked such a paradise, that it was difficult to believe that fever or any other ill ever came there. Yet of one of the lesser disagreeables to which it was subject, I had already seen something. Just before reaching Bandawe, we had noticed tiny flies rising in great clouds out of the lake. The captain had kept the steamer out of their way as well as he could, as he knew by experience how suffocating these clouds of flies were. As they rise the wind blows them on shore, where they completely smother the shrubs and trees. Then the women come out with baskets

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or mats, into which they shake them off the trees. Having collected them, they mix them with native flour, and bake it into cakes, which are said to be delicious, and to taste of fish. I had a cake given me, but I never could make up my mind to taste it; the smell and the sight of the flies at Bandawe were sufficient for me. Everything was covered with them, and had a horribly nasty fishy smell. These fly-cakes are made round and thick, and are very dark in colour. I still possess mine, and consider it a most interesting relic. It is quite safe to leave it about, for I do not think anyone would dare to touch it. The fly is called 'Kungo,' and just at the season at which I visited Bandawe, great clouds of them were constantly rising up out of the water.

There had lately been rather a scare at Bandawe, about some leopards that were said to have killed a number of goats. Accordingly two white men, accompanied by some natives, set off to hunt



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them. Presently they found a place in the long grass where, it was evident, one of them had recently lain, as the ground was still warm. The boys formed a ring round it, and the men got their guns ready. After a little while the leopard emerged from the long grass, and was fired at and wounded, but not fatally. With a great bound he sprang on one of the white men, bringing him to the ground. Holding his victim he turned and growled savagely at the others. The boys gave a wild yell of fear, and then like a shot the leopard sprang away. He had not been the least frightened by the guns, but was terrified at the yell. The man attacked by the leopard was ill for a long time, and finally had to go home to England, as one of his eyes was badly injured.

After leaving Bandawe, the scenery became very lovely, high mountains and well-wooded hills coming right down to the water. Between the hills were deep, dark-looking ravines, whose dark shadows

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were here and there relieved by bright silver lines, which marked the course of tumbling cascades. Now and then we came upon a beautiful little bay, with a white beach studded with native huts. We called at one of these, Ntaka Bay, where there is an administration and a telegraph station, and also at Florence Bay, the station for Kondowe. Here is Dr Law's Mission, which is already well up on its way to heaven, for it takes three hours' hard climbing to reach it, situated, as it is, on the top of the mountain. The pleasure of a visit there was deferred until my return journey. Near to Florence Bay is Mount Chiombi, or, as it is now called, Mount Waller, which is nearly 6000 feet high, and of a formation that is different from any mountain we had hitherto seen. It rises in four distinct terraces, and has a long flat top.

From the steamer we could catch glimpses of the telegraph line, and I realised the difficulties that must have

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been encountered in making it. Many of the places that had to be crossed were so steep, that the men had to be let down by ropes in order to fix the line.

Whenever we stopped to take in wood, or for any other purpose, I went on shore for a good walk, and hunted for shells and strange plants. I did not succeed in finding many varieties of shells. Either I was not lucky, or there are not many to be found by the lake-side. But I got some queer beans, and found the lovely jacquerity growing in greater perfection than I had ever seen it before. It was climbing all over the bushes and brambles, and the bunches of pods had burst open and showed the brilliant little scarlet seeds with their black heads. I was almost afraid of gathering them lest the seeds should fall out, and their beauty be lost, but I ventured, and succeeded in getting several bunches, which I brought home, where they still delight my eyes, and recall the lovely scene in the midst of which I

## A White Woman

gathered them. The day on which I collected these was a glorious one, and just perfect in the shade. Numbers of fish eagles could be seen in the trees looking out for their food, and uttering their extraordinary cry. They live well, for there is plenty of fish in Lake Nyasa, and that is one reason why the lake crocodiles are not so much feared by the people who live on its shores, for they say that where the crocodiles get plenty of fish they seldom attack man.

On the verandah of a trader's house near the lake I saw the lufah growing. This, too, is a creeper, and the ripe pods hang down just like large brown cucumbers, and when a bit of the brown outer covering is chipped off, the well-known network of the lufah appears. The Kaffir orange that grows so plentifully in Matabele and Mashonaland grows here too. The fruit is smooth and of a dark green colour, which turns rather yellow when ripe. It is about the size of a large

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orange, but has a hard shell instead of a rind. The natives like the fruit and find it refreshing, but I did not care for it; indeed, there is very little native fruit for which Europeans do care.

There was another lovely bean, of which I do not know the proper name, but out there it goes by the name of the 'Mahogany Bean.' The tree is large and spreading, and the pod is of a deep mahogany colour, and in size about five inches long and three broad. Inside it has a row of lovely beans, shaped like acorns, bright black with brilliant scarlet cups. I do not know if they are edible; I never heard of anyone eating them, and I did not try them.

As we approached Karonga, it was great fun to watch the natives making preparations for landing. Their bundles were unpacked and the most wonderful finery was produced. Some of them had worked at Blantyre two or three months, and having received their pay, had bought

## A White Woman

and brought back most extraordinary garments, in order to excite the envy and admiration of their friends. Two had selected old scarlet coats belonging to a Highland regiment. Very proud, but fearfully hot they looked in them when, with great difficulty, they had discovered the way to put them on. Of course, besides the coat, they only wore their Nsaru and plenty of beads and copper wire. The girls had bought brilliantly-coloured calico, in which they swathed themselves. Having accomplished their toilet so far, both men and girls proceeded to dress their hair. Concerning this, a great many consultations were held in order to determine the exact width and direction of the little path that had to be shaved, and the height of the forehead; for some of them wore their hair shaved quite a long way back, while others were content to leave it as it had grown. In shaving they used no soap, the native head supplying sufficient grease.

During the whole voyage it had been

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of great interest to me to watch the natives, especially the women with their tiny babies. The washing of the babies was a very simple process. The mother just dipped her hand in water and drew it over the child, but occasionally she poured a gourd full of water over it, and this always brought piercing screams from the infant. Then followed massage, I don't mean smacking, but really good gentle massage, which must have been splendid for the children. The feeding was the most remarkable proceeding. In addition to their natural food, the babies, from the time they are a day or two old, have one meal a day of native corn ground very fine and mixed with water in the form of gruel. This the mother stuffs into the baby's mouth, and no matter how it struggles and cries, a certain amount has to be swallowed. Curiously enough the babies seem to thrive on this treatment; and indeed, when a white baby dies, the natives say that the mother wished it to

## A White Woman

die, because she gave it nothing but milk.

The natives were as much interested in me as I was in them, and they especially enjoyed watching me knit. They had never seen any knitting before, and it quite took their fancy. Sometimes I used to sit on the step just above their deck, and then two or three of them would creep along as close as they dared and squat down and watch me. I tried hard to make one or two of the girls do a bit of knitting just for fun. But they would not attempt it while so many were watching, and I had not a second set of pins with me to let them try by themselves. Some of the natives were busy making ornaments for their wrists of beautifully fine drawn copper wire. Of these they gave me several; and the captain persuaded one of them to make me a bangle of elephant's hair; an ornament which they are very fond of wearing, as it is supposed to give them strength. It had a



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wonderful fastening, which had to be made while it was on the arm, and very much I wished someone had had a kodak at hand to take a picture of me and the native while he was doing it.

The voyage up Lake Nyasa was drawing to a close. From Fort Johnston to Karonga it takes eight days, as the stoppages for wood are frequent, and the steamer is often delayed by rough water caused by head winds. Livingstone called Nyasa the 'lake of storms,' and very bad the storms often are, especially in September and October, which are the roughest months. It is a big lake, three hundred and sixty miles long, and varying from fifteen to fifty miles in width. It is very deep, but in many places the sand stretches out such a long distance, that it is difficult for the steamer to anchor near the shore. The water is quite sweet and good for drinking. On the voyage we saw several large waterspouts; one, just like the trunk of a huge palm tree,

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straight and thick, until it ended in a feathery mass in the clouds.

The day before we reached Karonga the country became flatter, and the hills more distant. The lake was very rough, and I felt glad the voyage was coming to an end. When, finally, we did arrive, it was quite too rough to allow of the unloading of the cargo. To put out the cargo, the 'Domira' had to go round to a little bay about two miles from Karonga; but first the passengers were put off into a large canoe which came out to fetch them. When this canoe reached the boat, the pilot ladder was put over the side, and down that we had to scramble as well as we could while the steamer rolled and the canoe bobbed up and down in the most annoying and alarming manner. The A. L. C. agent had come out to fetch us, and I am sure he must have suffered terribly, as I know I crashed down upon him in anything but a fairy-like manner. He hid his sufferings valiantly, and to my



UNLOADING THE "DOM.RA" AT KARONGA.

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joy he did not have to be invalided home. Of course, the canoe could not get quite up to the shore, so the natives had to carry us off. I was mounted on the shoulder of a native, as usual, and when the man started I was not properly balanced. Perhaps on this account, or on account of the waves, which were very strong and rolled in with great force, we went along very unsteadily, and but that another native came to our assistance, we should both have had a tumble into the water. Fortunately, with his help, I was safely landed, none the worse for my perilous ride.

## CHAPTER VI

### FROM KARONGA ACROSS THE PLATEAU TO FIFE

KARONGA is a flat and very sandy place; and the sand which lies between the shore and the large 'Boma,' belonging to the A. L. C., is so loose and disagreeable to walk through, that I was glad the distance was not great. The 'Boma' looks a most imposing place. A high brick wall is built all round, with gun-holes in it, and a wide moat surrounds it. It is therefore well protected, and I believe that, some time back, the protection was much needed. The house is large, and has a beautifully wide verandah, and there are several stores and out-buildings, all, of course, inside the protecting wall.

The administration 'Boma,' with the post and the new telegraph office, is just

## A White Woman in Central Africa

a mile distant from the company's station, and the mission station is about as far on the other side.

The agent was much amused and surprised to hear that a 'tourist' had arrived, and he was somewhat appalled when he heard that I wanted men and an outfit to go alone to Lake Tanganyika. He kindly arranged to put me up for two or three days, as I wanted to re-pack and get various things at the store; also, I wanted to talk over my journey, and to have a little rest. There was no need for hurry, and the natives and their villages in that part being considerably different from those I had seen in other places, I was able to spend some time pleasantly in visiting them. They were a much wilder-looking set, tall and very strongly made, and wore nothing much save their ornaments and the skins of wild cats. They had belts made of copper wire twisted round hair, which were made to fit them very tightly. Often they wore five of

## A White Woman

these 'Manyetas,' as they were called. The brightly-polished copper contrasted well with their dark skins and looked quite handsome. The manyetas are very difficult to buy, and I was much puzzled as to why the natives objected to parting with them. After a time, I came to understand that the belts, being so small, were extremely difficult to get off; and the reason I had not been able to get one was, that at first I was always in too great a hurry. The poor men required time, and were obliged to use a good deal of oil before they could wriggle out of them. When they found I was staying some days at Karonga, they promised to bring me some, and before I left I became the happy possessor of four. They are very heavy, and the weight and size greatly astonished me, as natives usually seem to dislike wearing anything tight or heavy. But it seems that, for the sake of fashion, here, as elsewhere, almost anything will be endured. The women wear



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thick brass wire, coiled round and round their arms, till it forms a long cuff reaching nearly to their elbows, and in the same way round their necks, till it forms a deep collar, which must be heavy and uncomfortable, but in the brilliant sunshine looks bright and attractive. In the lobes of their ears they wear stoppers as large as draughtmen, and similar in shape.

A large cloud of flies, like those we had seen at Bandawe, had been blown on shore just before we arrived, and the air and trees were full of them, but, fortunately, the natives and the birds soon cleared them off.

I found great amusement in making the preparations necessary for my further journey. I was anxious to get a new hat, as the one I had, had become very dilapidated, and did not give me sufficient protection from the sun. I hunted the store over and could only find one that was at all suitable, and that was a large

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hat of grey felt, very like a cowboy's. It was hideous, of course; but that I did not mind: what I did mind was that it was too large for my head and tumbled too easily down over my eyes. At last I found a small brown felt hat that fitted my head and went inside the other most comfortably. The two together formed an excellent protection from the sun.

Then I had to find a boy who could speak a little English, as they told me it was absolutely necessary that I should take one with me, in case of any difficulty arising with the carriers. I only knew at the very most about a dozen words of their language. So a boy was engaged for me, who had been brought up at a mission station, and was supposed to speak English. On the journey I discovered that his English was distinctly limited in quantity and peculiar in quality, and the boy himself was seldom to be found when specially wanted. Still he was

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of some little use, and his English, which he had chiefly learnt from the Bible, was often extremely amusing and quaint. One morning, soon after we set off, I called him several times without any result; at last I heard a scratching on my tent and a voice, 'It is I; behold I am come.' At other times he would use the words 'verily' and 'lo' in a droll way.

After securing a boy, I had to get a cook, and then to select the food I wished to take with me. I took a small stock of tinned meat in case of need, but never used it, as I object to all tinned things, and in such heat I did not care for meat at all. Native fowls can be had nearly everywhere; they are small, but if well cooked are good eating, and are certainly not expensive. One yard of calico, worth about threepence, purchases two. I took Californian pears, apricots and peaches, even though they were in tins, and thoroughly enjoyed them. I also took a good supply of rice, marmalade and jam,

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many tins of biscuits, some cocoa, and, of course, plenty of tea. I took for barter calico, both blue and white, beads in great variety, and salt, for money is not used or wanted. Then my cooking utensils had to be selected, but they were very simple. A kettle was *the* most necessary possession, as all the water for drinking had to be boiled. In addition to a few articles of crockery, besides the kettle, one or two saucepans were, I think, all. Everything was packed in baskets and made up into loads of about fifty pounds.

One morning there came the excitement of choosing the men who were to go with me. The doors leading into the 'Boma' had been opened, as they were every morning, to let in men in want of work. These squatted on the ground, patiently waiting till something was found for them to do. A number of them were called up, and ten men were chosen to carry my machila: they were selected in pairs about the same

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height and build, and their names were all taken down. Then the 'tenga-tenga,' as the load-carriers are called, were picked out, each was given his load, and his name and the weight of his load were written down. I had to take eleven men to carry the luggage, two for my own personal baggage, and the rest to carry the tent, camp-bed, bedding, food and cooking utensils, etc. In addition to these, I had my boy, cook and sukambali (washer-up), and a capitao over all, making in all twenty-five men. When the selection of the men, and the apportioning of the loads had been satisfactorily concluded, each man had 'posho,' that is, one yard of cloth, given to him to provide him with food for a week. This they took to the native village where they made their purchases, and in about an hour returned ready to start. Nearly all of them came armed with a spear and a small axe, some had a knobkerry as well, and

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their food was slung on their arms in the skins of wild cats and other animals. The 'tenga-tenga' had been chosen as much as possible from different tribes, as that made it less likely that they would all put down their loads at once and go off and leave me.

All this had, of course, taken a considerable time, and as I did not get fairly started till nearly twelve o'clock, we did not go far the first day. It was tremendously hot, so we went along very quietly and often stopped to rest under any shade-trees we came to. We soon reached a river that was rather deep, and had very steep banks, which were difficult to get down without tumbling into the water, but the boys were used to taking loads across and managed uncommonly well. After crossing the river, the country, which had been very flat, became more hilly and wooded, and the scenery more interesting. Then we crossed another stream, and about

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four o'clock came to our stopping place at Mpata. There we camped for the night. It was a pretty village, but my tent was surrounded by bananas, and the mosquitoes were terrible. My mosquito net had not been well put up, and the wretched insects kept getting inside the net and worrying me.

While my tent was being put up I wandered round the village to have a look at the natives. I heard the old 'tap, tap,' that one hears so much of in the South Sea Islands, and I found the women busy at the same kind of work they do there—hammering out bark to make cloth for wearing or for wrapping things up in. This bark is the inner bark of the hibiscus and other trees; they soak it for some time in water, then lay it on a piece of wood, or the trunk of a fallen tree, and beat it with a small hammer made of horn, and usually notched in a pattern at the flat end. They hammer it out to about

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double the original width, then do the same to another strip and, after more soaking, hammer the two edges together, and so on till they get it the desired width and thickness. Then they dye it in patterns according to fancy, with different coloured dyes made from bark.

The boys in the village had several kinds of musical instruments entirely of native make. Indeed, all natives seem fond of music. On the 'sansi,' or native hand piano, they play really sweet tunes. These pianos are made of an oblong piece of wood, and the one I have is about eight inches long and six wide. A narrow bar of iron is fastened across the top of the wood to hold in place the strips of iron, which are of different lengths and form the keys. Across the lower end of the wood is a piece of thin iron or tin to which are fastened pieces of shell, which make a jingling and buzzing sound when the keys are being played. The 'sansi' is held in both



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hands, the fingers being underneath and the thumbs being used to press the tips of the iron notes, which vary in number from sixteen to thirty, or, as I have been told, even more. Many different kinds of instruments are made with gourds cut in two. The gourd acts as a sounding board, and to it is attached a piece of wood, to which are fastened from one to four strings. These are played either with the fingers or a bit of bamboo. They also have drums of every conceivable size and shape, and queer sorts of rattles. I was never short of music the whole way, but the 'sansi' was decidedly the pleasantest to listen to. I often play on my own when I am alone, and like it quite as well as many pianos I hear; but then I am not musical.

When night fell and the moon rose, there was a fine noise in Mpata village, made by the drums and the singers. It was really a very lovely and pic-

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turesque scene; the brilliant moonlight, the huts dotted about and half-hidden in a grove of bananas, the natives squatting round their fires, chattering and smoking their large pipes, the mountains, looking more imposing in the moonlight, and the shining river flowing peacefully on; and my enjoyment of it all was added to considerably by the fun of being alone there.

Next morning I started off in good time, a little before six o'clock, having had a cup of cocoa and some biscuits, while the boys were packing up the tent and all the things we had used. This they did with wonderful quickness. As it was much pleasanter to travel in the morning while it was cool, we all started very briskly. We crossed the river again twice, and for some distance found the way rather rough. It lay along the stony bed of an old river-course. Then we began to go up hill and had a long, stiff climb, for which we were rewarded by

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an extensive view from the top. All day the road went up and down, frequently crossing streams and the dry beds of rivers, and nearly always through forest, where the trees were mostly stunted and scrubby, for the only fine ones grew in the hollows or near the water. Many of the trees had leaves which reminded me of the fronds of the common polypody, and there were acacias, fig trees of various kinds, and a quantity of bamboo.

About ten o'clock we came to a stream, and there I rested for an hour or more, and had my breakfast. The water was very muddy-looking, but as it was the best we could get, I ventured to use it for making tea. Then we went on again till about two o'clock, when, having found a good place in the forest not far from a stream, where we could camp for the night, we made a halt.

This division of the day suited me, and seemed to suit the men. I much

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preferred going on quietly till the day's journey was ended, and then having plenty of time to visit a village or to search for curiosities, to resting in the middle of the day and going on again in the afternoon. We generally came to a good place for our camp about two or three o'clock, and when once my tent was put up, work for the day was over for everybody, except the cook. His work was almost too trivial to be so called.

Getting the camp in order was done with remarkable quickness, and with a total absence of confusion, for each boy had his special work to do. Some pitched the tent, some fetched water, and others made the fires, while the arrangement of my personal baggage was allotted to my English-speaking boy. Before starting, it had been suggested to me that I might like to superintend the cook a little, and instruct him in the art of making such nice dishes as might be managed with our limited

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means. Accordingly, on the second day of our journey, I boldly ventured into the improvised kitchen, but I soon came away somewhat horrified at the state of things I found there. The cook held a plucked fowl in one hand, and was beating it with the other—black, I feared, in both senses—to make it tender. As I wished to be able to eat my dinner, I never went on a tour of inspection again. As far as possible throughout the journey, I ate everything with my fingers, being doubtful of the knives, as I once saw the sukambali cleaning them in the manner in which an unsophisticated school-child will clean his slate. I do not suppose for a moment my cook was worse than many of the native cooks, but I do not think visits to the kitchen are a wise proceeding on the part of those who want to enjoy their meals.

My ten o'clock meal was one which invariably provided me with considerable

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amusement. I had it, of course, picnic fashion, on the ground, and though, as a rule, when we made our halt, there was not a human being outside our own party to be seen, yet before the breakfast was ready I never failed to find myself the centre of an admiring crowd of natives, men, women and children, who had gathered from all points of the compass, and who squatted on the ground at a respectful distance, and watched me with the most vigilant and curious attention. After a time this persistent scrutiny became embarrassing, and I made an attempt to produce a diversion by starting a game to amuse the children. This was a matter of considerable difficulty, for it was not easy to make the children understand what I wanted them to do, and if I moved the least bit towards them, they screamed with fright and ran off as fast as they could. At last I got them to stand in rows, and hold out their hands to catch the bits

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of gingerbread and biscuits I threw to them. They were very much frightened and very shy at first, but soon they entered into the fun and were delighted whenever there was a good catch, and I clapped my hands as a mark of approbation. The men thoroughly enjoyed it too, and helped me to start them in races, etc. I was pleased, and not a little surprised, to find that the children were not in the least greedy. Those who were successful saved their biscuits, and at the end divided them with those who had been less fortunate. A game with the children became a regular adjunct to the morning meal, for, to my amusement, I found that my boys at each morning halt initiated the children into the mysteries of the proceedings, and I found them quite ready for a game. Dinner was a more solemn meal, which I generally had at dusk. Sometimes I had to have it by candle-light, though the light of my candles was considerably

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dimmed by the cloud of mosquitoes, moths and other insects, which circled round the flame until they fell a singed mass into the tallow. My attendants, meanwhile, were usually busy in preparing their own meals, and their friends were interested in watching them.

The natives, as a rule, only eat one big meal a day, but then they devour a perfect mountain of food. They make a sort of thick porridge of native corn, which they boil until it is very stodgy. This done, they cut a large piece of bark from a tree to serve as a dish, turn the stuff out of the pot on to it, and then they all sit round, taking pinches off the heap, with which they stuff themselves, until they attain to the proportions of an alderman. They are very fond, too, of roasting Indian corn, making pop-corn of it. Then they have several kinds of beans, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, cucumbers, ground-nuts, and rice. They are fond of meat when they can get it, but a big



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meal of freshly-killed meat makes them almost as intoxicated as if they had had too much to drink. During the day they satisfy themselves with smoking their big pipe, which is passed round for each to take a whiff, with nibbling at Indian corn, or perhaps a handful of stodge left from the night before, and with constant drinks of water. Their native-made drink is called pombé. It is made from native corn, and it is said to be intoxicating if drunk in large quantities. I do not think my men ever got hold of any; at all events they were always sober and well behaved.

As we got higher on to the plateau, the nights and mornings became much cooler, in fact, the early mornings were quite cold. And when we started a little before sunrise, about six o'clock, I was quite glad of a good sharp walk with a cape over my shoulders. At this early hour the boys, too, would walk quickly, and they always went along with their arms crossed in front, and a hand on each

## A White Woman

shoulder. They were very quiet, and had not a bit of cheeriness or fun in them until the sun was well up. Then they would sign for me to get into the machila and off they went, singing and ready for all sorts of games. They were a happy set of boys, just like a lot of children, and I often wished I could talk more to them. But, perhaps, had I been able to do so, I should not have liked them so well. The natives have any amount of patient endurance, and also a keen sense of humour—two very excellent qualities on a journey. I invariably found them perfectly honest, and I am certain white men would not have been more careful of me, or have behaved better, while they certainly would not have been so entertaining. The boys were very good, too, at calling my attention to game, of which, in the early morning, we often saw a great quantity. At times we saw large flocks of guinea-fowl.

On one occasion they were most

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anxious for me to see some game which was a good distance off. I got out my field-glasses, and after I had had a good look, I offered them to the boys. A funnier sight I have seldom seen. Each in turn took the glasses, screwed up first one eye and then the other, stood on one leg and danced about for joy, before passing on the glasses to the next one. Whether they really saw anything, or only pretended, I do not know, but they were always anxious to look through whenever I used them. Their own sight is marvellously good, and they can see and recognise objects and people far more quickly than a European.

Another day, when I was walking, we came on a long procession of ants crossing the path and each carrying its load. I stopped a while to watch them, and then pointing to the ants I said to the boys, 'tenga-tenga,' load-carriers. They saw at once what I meant, and enjoyed the joke hugely, repeating it to the others behind.

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On the third day of our journey from Karonga, we came to a painfully well-made road; all the green growth had been cleared off, and ditches had been cut on each side in a way that made it horribly monotonous, it was like a turnpike road, and, from the glare of the white ground, almost unendurable in such bright sunlight. I think the boys disliked it as much as I did, for whenever there was a chance of taking a native path they did so.

That evening we came to Fort Hill, an imposing-looking place. The house was large, had a good verandah, and round it was a big stockade and ditch. A sentry was at the gate, but no one appeared to be living there. Accordingly, I had my tent pitched just inside the stockade. Two large hornbills were walking about and making the most melancholy noise. When I gave them food they took it with apparently no enjoyment, and in just the manner one takes pills. Alto-

## in Central Africa

gether it was a wofully depressing place, and I was glad to move on next morning. I was told afterwards that a white man had been stationed there, but had died, at which I did not wonder. Now a native is the occupant.

Next morning we passed Nyala, another deserted station, where two white men had died, one rather recently, I should imagine, as there were several unopened cases with his name on, standing in one of the rooms. From this place, too, I hurried away without regret, as it only filled me with sad thoughts, and made me wonder painfully about the occupants to whom death had come in this lonely place, so far from friends and home.

After Nyala, the road was not so distressingly good, and we had a lovely journey over a pass, the name of which, unfortunately, I did not hear. The road was rough for walking, and we had to make many sharp ascents and descents before reaching the top of the pass, but

## A White Woman

once there, I had an extensive view over endless forest, hill-tops and plains. On the way we had crossed several streams, many almost dry; but whenever there was a little water to be found my boys stopped for a wash and a bath. These lake natives and those on the Tanganyika plateau are much cleaner in their habits than those about Blantyre and Zomba; and on the journey from Karonga, I did not suffer nearly so much from the 'Bouquet d'Afrique.' I may, of course, have got a little more used to it, but at the same time I am quite sure it was not nearly so bad.

On the fifth day out from Karonga we reached the Collector's house at Ikawa, where I saw the first white people since leaving Karonga. The Collector himself was away, but had left most hospitable orders with his native servants. They had been told that anyone who arrived was to be made welcome. I was very thankful for a rest here, for I had had

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rather a long day, and had been walking too much in the hot sun. As a consequence, I did not feel very well. Instead of being able to talk to the Europeans who, like myself, were availing themselves of the Collector's hospitality, I went off to my room, taking with me some papers and magazines, of which there was a splendid supply, but I was too tired even to enjoy these. Next morning, not wishing again to travel in the heat of the sun, I started off early before anyone was about, in order to reach the mission station at Mwenzo while it was fairly cool.

At Mwenzo I had a very kindly welcome from the missionary and his wife. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing a lady again, and having a 'real good talk,' as for nearly a week I had not had an opportunity of communicating my thoughts to anyone. The house was a perfect picture; everything was so prettily arranged and so bright and clean, that it became

## A White Woman in Central Africa

evident at a glance that there was a lady at the head of it. I spent a delightful day there, stayed the night, and went on early the next morning, feeling refreshed and fit for anything.

It took only about an hour to go from Mwenzo to Fife, as the African Lakes Station is called, and I arrived there about eight o'clock in the morning, after an easy journey over a good road, running through rather uninteresting country, covered with scrubby forest most of the way.



## CHAPTER VII

### FROM FIFE TO LAKE TANGANYIKA

WHEN I arrived at Fife, the A. L. C. agent advised my going on at once to Lake Tanganyika, as he thought it possible I might just catch the little steamer, the 'Good News,' before she left Kituta.

My boys had only been engaged to go as far as Fife; and though some of them wanted to go on the whole way, it was considered better to take others, who belonged to the country we had to traverse, and I was quite sorry to have to say good-bye to the old hands, they had been so cheery and attentive to me, and had carried me so well. After the

## A White Woman

business of paying them off had been completed, I had to look over my provisions and belongings, to re-pack them, and then to choose a fresh lot of twenty-two boys. My own boy, the cook and sukambali, all went on with me. I always found the engaging of the boys a very interesting proceeding, and on this occasion I derived as much amusement as before from watching the natives as they were called up by the agent and his head boy, who selected those who were considered suitable for the machila and load carrying. When the list of names was given me, I found it hard work to pronounce them, though, when spoken by the natives, the names all had a musical sound.

By twelve o'clock the same day all was ready for a fresh start, and I set off once more. This was, of course, the hottest part of the day; but it seemed better to start then than to wait until next morning, as probably even then, owing

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to having the new set of men, there would have been some delay which would have prevented our starting at the usual early hour. We were not under the necessity of going very far that day, and, indeed, we only went on until four o'clock and then camped for the night.

Very soon after leaving Fife I came upon some tents pitched near the road; I found that they belonged to the English members of the British and German Boundary Commission. I stayed long enough to have a most interesting chat with two of them, and then I went on my way feeling that I had suddenly come into quite civilised regions, as during the last two days I had been constantly meeting Europeans.

My new lot of men were even madder than the last ones; they sang and danced most of the time, but were quiet directly they thought I had had enough noise; and when one day I fell asleep in my

## A White Woman

machila, they walked along as quietly as mice till they saw I was awake again. The capitao was a tall, well-made man, with much better features than most of the natives, and he kept all the boys in excellent order.

The day after leaving Fife I passed another empty house, which had been inhabited by a white man; but I think the owner was only away on a journey. I stayed there for my breakfast, and had some delicious fresh milk, the first I had had for some time; for usually, when the chief of a village sent me milk as a present, it was quite sour; I think the natives prefer sour milk.

The interviews I had with the chiefs were always very comical. At each halting place the chief of the adjacent village would arrive after my tent was pitched, and when, having had all my things comfortably arranged, I was sitting in my camp-chair in the shadiest spot I could find, watching my boys and waiting until

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the kettle boiled for tea. Sometimes, as soon as he made his appearance, the natives who had collected to watch us, and were squatting on the ground near our camp, clapped their hands in a solemn manner, continuing to do so until he had taken his seat. As this was not always done, possibly it had something to do with the rank of the chief, or was only a custom of particular parts. The chief seated himself opposite to me, and we gazed solemnly at each other, until the women folk arrived with gourds containing milk which, to my disappointment, I always found was sour, and presents of eggs, which certainly were not new-laid. In one village, indeed, I saw a woman take some eggs from under a sitting hen and then she offered them to me. These choice gifts I received and passed on to my boy, and in return presented the woman with a few beads and a little salt, which is a great luxury to the natives. They were made wildly happy if, in addition to these,

## A White Woman

I gave them an empty biscuit tin or a few matches in a box. When this exchange of gifts was completed the chief took his departure; but the other natives waited to watch me have my tea, and were greatly interested to see me pour it out and drink it from a cup with a handle. One day, for fun, I poured some tea into an enamelled tin cup, and when it was cool enough sent it by the boy for the natives to taste. It had neither milk nor sugar in it, but was just as I was drinking it myself. They tasted it eagerly, then made horrid faces and spat it out again. I gave them some more with a lot of sugar in, but though that seemed to please them better, they evidently did not think much of my beverage.

That night I had the prettiest camping place I had had so far. It was in the forest, and had big grey rocks all round, and near it was a narrow, deep ravine, down which was running a lovely stream of pure water, one of the many sources of

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the Congo. The colours of the trees were very varied. They were putting forth their new leaves, and these showed every variety of tint, brown, pale red, pink, and a fresh light green. One was a perfect glory of scarlet leaves, and many that flowered before the leaves appeared were brilliant with blossoms of white, scarlet and yellow. I went for a good scramble among the rocks and came on the source of the stream where the water bubbled up from under the rocks. It was a great treat to have a good drink of fresh water, after the boiled water to which I had of late been limited.

I was wandering on, thoroughly enjoying myself, when I saw some of the boys coming to fetch me back. I could not understand why, until my English-speaking boy told me they had seen the spoor of a lion, and that it was not safe to wander far away. This, and watching the preparations for making fires all round my tent, was very exciting, though I began

## A White Woman

to feel a little alarmed lest, in their desire to protect me from the lion, they should set the tent on fire. In the night I got up several times to look out of my tent. It was a very picturesque sight to see the fires blazing away and the groups of men squatting and lying by them. They seemed to be awake and talking the whole night; but I am told that they usually take turns to watch and keep up the fires when lions are about. I heard lots of jackals that night, and all sorts of noises of other beasts, but did not hear the roar of a lion.

In the early morning, when I was up and ready to start, I was again impressed with the loveliness of the place, as the morning light added a fresh beauty to the colouring.

All the way from there to Mambwe, one of the B. C. A. stations, the road was very hilly and pretty. Mambwe used to belong to the French Fathers, but after the making of the Stevenson Road, as the



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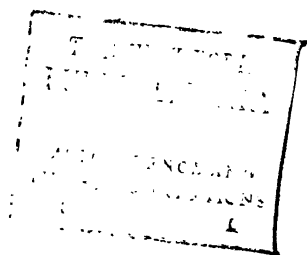
road we were on was called, they determined to move to a place less easy of access, and accordingly sold the station. They had made a beautiful garden, as they do at all their settlements, and had planted it with orange and lemon trees, papaws and bananas, strawberries, tomatoes, and various kinds of fruits and vegetables, of which the official now living there, and who bestows considerable pains on keeping up the garden, reaps the benefit. The French Fathers seem to be a fine set of men, clever at adapting themselves to the country, and at making the very best of it. Our people are at last becoming more alive to the benefits which arise from a good garden, and the improvement to their health which comes from having plenty of vegetables and fruit, instead of having to eat so many 'tinned' horrors. In several places when I asked about the garden, the answer was that there had not been time to make one, or that it was too difficult to manage. Yet what the French Fathers have done

## A White Woman

at all their stations, we ought to be able to do too.

That night I camped at a place called Mpanga, where again there was an empty house. It was quite a large one, with a high stockade all round. The poles of the stockade were adorned at the tops with queer and very roughly-carved birds and animals, and, after a native fight, the heads of the vanquished were doubtless stuck up there in addition.

I visited the large native village near. It was also surrounded by a stockade, and both it and the inhabitants were interesting. The women were wearing more than usually enormous stoppers in the lobes of their ears, some carved, and others covered with tin and ornamented with brass nails. They and the men wore round their necks a great deal of the hair from the elephant's tail, which they suppose gives them strength; and most of them wore also the little horn from a small bok, given them as a charm or cure for illness





**MEN SEWING.**

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by the 'medicine man.' At one place an old chief gave me one to wear, 'to give me a good heart'; but whether he meant a kind or a strong one, I could not discover. In all the villages the people seemed busily occupied with their work; the ground was kept swept round the huts, and they were cleaner and less malodorous than our courts and alleys at home. The women's work is to grind and sift the corn, pick the beans, etc., for food, collect the firewood, fetch the water, cook, hoe the ground, and gather in the crops. They also do all the bead-work, and in the parts where pottery is made, that is also their work. The men do all the sewing and mending of what little clothing they have, and they repair the gourds used for household purposes. They clear the ground for planting—a process in the course of which they cut off all the branches from the trees and place them round the trunks, where they leave them till quite dry.

## A White Woman

Then they set fire to the whole, and, with the wood-ashes that remain, they fertilise the ground. The men also do all the weaving and basket-making. They get iron and smelt it, and make all their implements, spears, arrows, knives, etc. They build the huts, leaving only the floors to be made by the women. Then, of course, they do all the hunting, fighting, and most of the talking.

In some parts of the country the native marriage laws are rather amusing. Separations are very easily obtained. If either speak disrespectfully of the other's friends, or if the husband neglects to mend anything belonging to his wife, or if the wife does not hoe, cook, or do her work diligently, the marriage can be dissolved. The price paid for a wife seemed to vary in different parts; usually the price is so many cows, or hoes, or so much cloth of native weaving.

A short distance from Mpanga, I had a splendid view from the top of a hill





ANT HILL.

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over a big plain. There were very few trees, most of the long grass was burnt, and the ground was covered with enormous ant-hills. Some of the old ones were so large, that they had trees and bush growing on them. Most of them were from eight to ten feet high, and some of them were more. The outside of these was extremely hard, owing to a secretion the ants use in preparing the earth for their hills. These were of different shapes, mostly conical, while some had additions in the shape of extra spires or towers. Where the ant-hills are smaller and rounder, the disused ones can be utilised as ovens when hollowed out, and they serve splendidly for boiling a kettle over, assuming that they are properly hollowed out, so that a good fire can be lighted inside.

On descending into the valley, which lay in front of me, I found I had to cross a very long bridge, built of sticks and mud, which stretched for quite a

## A White Woman

quarter of a mile over a marsh and a river. The bridge was terribly broken and rotten, as it had not been repaired since the last rains. I had to get out of the machila and walk over, not a very easy matter, as in places there were great gaps wider than I dare jump. However, the men were quite equal to the occasion, and scrambled down into the mud and water and lifted me safely over.

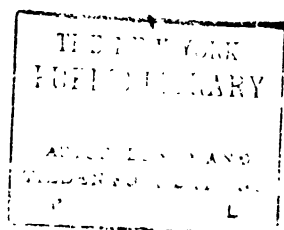
Kasanvu, a village close to which we stopped for breakfast, was very picturesque. It stood on the side of a hill, with a good view across the valley to the ridge opposite, which was covered with boulders, great square blocks of rock, with bush growing round and about them. I had to do a good deal of walking, as the road was very steep, and went over rocks and loose stones; but the views were good, and I preferred walking, as I could see so much more, and could stop at will to examine anything curious.

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**STOCKADE.**

## in Central Africa

I saw and heard many more birds than I expected. Most of them had very brilliant plumage, some had crimson wings, and there were lovely grass-green birds with crests and red beaks and cheeks. The gaily-coloured birds generally had loud, shrill cries, but often in the early morning, and also about sunset time, I heard very sweet notes, and imagined their owners were much plainer in appearance, as they were difficult to catch sight of. One quite small bird was decorated with a very long feather in each wing. I picked up several of these, and they measure twenty-six inches in length.

That day, as we passed a native village, which, as usual, had a high stockade all round it, my boys began to sing vigorously, and marched along on each side of my machila. The men from the village all came out and sang too, and followed us, singing and shouting, to the top of the next hill. It was most exciting and amusing, and I longed to know why they

## A White Woman

did it. I was anxious to find out whether the inhabitants of the village were special friends of any of my boys, or if it was just their way of greeting a European traveller.

At length I arrived at Kawimbe, a London Mission Station, and on our arrival my men shouted and yelled their loudest. On hearing the noise, the missionary came out and greeted me most warmly. He said that they had been expecting me for some time, and that my room was all ready for me. I was much astonished, and replied, that I was sure it was not for me, as they could not have heard I was coming. Just then his wife came out and greeted me in the same kind and hearty way. I again protested, but was assured that they had heard I was coming, and wondered why I had been so long on the way. Then came the question, 'But where is your husband?' I replied, 'I have not the least idea.' 'But where did you leave him?' I assured them I had never done

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anything so unkind as to leave him. Seeing that they in their turn were quite puzzled, I asked them to tell me who they took me for. Then they told me that they had been expecting some new missionaries. I at once cleared up their misgivings by informing them that these missionaries were still at Fife, resting on account of fever, and that they hoped to come on in a few days. Of course, they had not heard of me, and they were greatly amused and interested to meet someone who had come merely to see the land and the people, and they gave me the kindest possible welcome, although I was not the expected visitor. After my return home I discovered that we had many mutual friends, of whom we should have enjoyed talking, had we only known at the time.

Close to the mission house is a large native village, and the land round it is wonderfully well cultivated. Wheat is grown, and excellent flour made for sale,

## A White Woman

as they have hand-mills for grinding the corn, a great improvement on the old way of crushing and rubbing the corn between stones, which method makes the flour so very gritty. There was a splendid garden belonging to the mission station, where they grew most excellent potatoes, tomatoes, peas, beans, cabbages, onions; in fact, nearly everything that is to be found in an English garden. Also, there was a large farm-yard with quite a number of cows, and we had delicious fresh milk and butter—a rare and delightful luxury in these parts. Here, again, I saw and appreciated the advantage of having a lady to superintend the household.

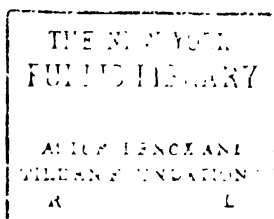
Roaming about the place were three lovely crested cranes, charmingly dainty-looking birds, which I found most fascinating to watch. These birds are easily tamed and are very intelligent and useful in a garden, as they live chiefly on insects and grubs. They do not seem to wander far away, when once they have settled in





**BEATING OUT BEANS AND MAKING GRAIN STORES.**

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a place. I tried hard to get a young one to bring home with me, but could not find one; all I saw were too old and large to take away.

The village by the mission station was a particularly pretty one, especially in the evening light at sunset. Then the colours of the thatch on the huts grew beautiful, showing every shade of brown, and making one long to be able to paint such a picture of it as would convey its beauty to the eyes of friends at home. Photographs, though very delightful, and splendid reminders to those who have seen the places, convey but a poor idea of the beauty of scenery—the chief charm of which lies in the colouring—to those who have not seen it. The huts of this village were as usual round, and the doors were so low that I had to crawl in almost on my hands and knees. In the middle of the hut is a semi-circular screen made of mud and wattle, behind which the natives sleep, and where they can have a fire when

## A White Woman

required. In the space between this screen and the wall of the hut they have a fire at which they do their cooking. The wide overhanging thatch, which is supported on poles, forms an excellent verandah, which shades them from the sun or rain while they work, talk, or take their mid-day siesta. It is the colouring of the smoke from the fires that gives the thatch such lovely shades. In the village I saw a native being cupped for fever. On each temple was put a horn, the end of which was stopped with bee's-wax, the blood that is drawn out is thrown on the ground, and that gets rid of the disease.

About three hours from Kawimbe is the B. S. A. Station of Mbala, or Abercorn, as it is now called. Just before reaching Mbala, we passed a lovely little lake, Lake Kilwa, which the Collector told me was dry ground only a few years ago. He had many times walked over the part where the lake is now.

I only stayed at Mbala for the men to

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have a rest, and then, as they were willing, and indeed anxious, to get to Kituta that night, we set off for our journey of five hours. On the way we went up and down several steep rocky hills, and then, for the last hour before reaching Kituta, the road went steadily down, making a descent of three thousand feet. Parts of the way were very rocky and parts very sandy. From many points along it I had lovely peeps of Lake Tanganyika.

As soon as the boys caught sight of the lake, they began to sing and dance most excitedly. They had been very amusing and very mad most of the time. One favourite game of theirs seemed to be to pretend that enemies were hiding in the bush ; they would creep and crouch about in the most stealthy manner, then spring out with wild shouts. Once they all vanished, except the two who were carrying me ; then suddenly they came yelling and springing from either side of the path, brandishing their spears and axes at me.

## A White Woman in Central Africa

I clapped my hands and called out their native word for 'good,' at which they were delighted; but, at the same time, I confess, it had been a little alarming, and I was glad to find that it was only pretence and done for my amusement. They were a capital lot of boys, very good-tempered and very happy, and I was sincerely sorry to have to part with them at Kituta. The journey from Karonga to Kituta had only taken me eleven days. The usual time allowed is a fortnight, but the boys had carried me well, and we had not been hindered by illness, as so many people are.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RETURN JOURNEY FROM LAKE TANGANYIKA TO KARONGA

My arrival at the African Lakes Station at Kituta caused great excitement. The agent there had not heard I was coming, and such an event as the arrival of a lady travelling alone, and for pleasure, had never been known in those parts before.

Kituta was quite the best A. L. C. Station I had seen. The house is a long one, with one storey, a good wide verandah, and a well-thatched roof. It stands on a raised piece of ground, with steps up to it, and has a lovely view down on to the lake. The various stores are all in separate buildings, and the whole is sur-

## A White Woman

rounded by a high, strong stockade. Along the front of the house is a tall row of cotton trees, the forest at the back, beautifully wooded, mountains on each side, and the lovely lake in front. It was an ideal place, viewed externally, but the inside was dreadfully comfortless, and I felt heartily sorry for the agent stationed there. He had sole charge of the place, and was the only white man in it, save on those occasions when the 'Good News' was at that end of the lake, and then the captain stayed with him. It did not seem right to place a man by himself in such a remote spot. When he had attacks of fever, it must have been miserable for him to have only natives round him, and to be burdened with the anxiety he would naturally feel on such occasions about the large quantity of ivory, cloth and goods of all descriptions for which he was responsible. The house was wretchedly fitted up, and there was scarcely a book about the place. It seemed hard that a company which stationed a man so



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far away from his fellows did not keep him supplied with papers and literature from home. I had only a few magazines with me, and for these the agent was most thankful.

The garden was a little distance away from the house, and near to a stream, so that it was easily watered. It was not a very good time to see it, as it was looking very bare; but they told me that a great variety of fruit and vegetables grow there.

We had a very exciting time the night that I arrived. The native watchman fired off his gun twice, and everyone rushed out; but it was only a hyena, which, of course, escaped uninjured.

Before arriving at Kituta, I had seen that the little steamer was on the lake, and I was in a state of great joy, thinking I had come just at the right time. But, alas! a sad disappointment was in store for me; the 'Good News' certainly was there, but the fire-bars were burnt out, and until fresh

## A White Woman

ones came, she could not be used for a long journey. As there was no chance of getting to the north end of the lake on the steamer, I enquired about a dhow on which I could perhaps have gone to Ujiji. But there was not one to be had, and the agent absolutely refused to let me have a native boat, as there had just been a very sad accident with one on the lake. Two members of the Belgium Commission, who thought that they could get themselves and their loads more quickly to the other side of the lake by water than by land, had engaged two large canoes, with some thoroughly experienced native rowers; but, unfortunately, they had insisted on rounding a headland, against the wishes of the capitao and the natives, who, of course, understood both the canoe and the lake best, had been struck by a heavy sea and overturned. Though they were all good swimmers, the surf dashing against the stones was too much for them, and the two Europeans, together with the five

## in Central Africa

natives, were drowned. It was a terribly sad affair, and the agent rightly refused to give any assistance to Europeans afterwards who wanted to cross the lake in a native boat. The lake is very treacherous, sudden and bad storms often come on. It is the longest fresh-water lake in the world, being four hundred miles long. The width varies from thirty to sixty miles ; the depth is, I believe, unknown.

When the captain of the 'Good News' found how terribly disappointed I was at not being able to go on the lake, he spent a whole day in patching up the fire-bars, and doing all he could to get the steamer into working order, and on the following morning he got up steam and took me out to the widest part of the lake, so that I could get a good view of the south end, which is said to be the most beautiful. Kituta lies at the end of a long narrow bay ; and once you get beyond that, the lake widens considerably, until it attains a breadth of sixty miles. In the rainy season it is possible to

## A White Woman

see both sides, but when I was there in September, the weather was too hazy; there had been no rain since April. Directly the rain begins, usually in November, the whole appearance of the country changes; the smoke-like haze goes, and the air becomes so clear that you can see for very great distances. The mountains round the south end of the lake were high and thickly wooded. One of them was in shape very like Mount Chiombi, on Lake Nyasa, and had terraces up to the top.

While on the lake we saw a great number of hippos and crocodiles, which, of course, are much less disturbed there than on the Shiré River. It afforded me the greatest satisfaction to be on the lake, and I was very sorry when we had to turn back; but it had been hard work all the time to keep the steam up, and it was quite impossible to go on any longer. The captain, in trying to console me for the disappointment I felt at not being able to go the whole

## in Central Africa

length of the lake, told me that there were only four other ladies living who had been on Tanganyika. That, I fear, instead of consoling me, only made me feel more vexed that, having got so far, I could not go farther still. At one time I had thoughts of waiting until the boat was repaired, but that meant staying until the rainy season had begun. I have since heard that the 'Good News' was not got into working order till the December following, so that, as things turned out, I was lucky in deciding to return at once.

There was a very large native village close by the A. L. C. Station, and the inhabitants appeared to have found me extremely interesting; more so, in fact, than was quite agreeable to me, for I could scarcely go for a walk without being followed by a large crowd of women and children, who watched and imitated all that I did. I was anxious to find some shells, and every time I picked one up, all rushed to do the same and

## A White Woman

brought them to me in handfuls. Though rather annoying, it was not a little amusing to be pursued by such a crowd, all of them whispering and giggling. The children kept running on in front, and then turning round and coming back, in order to get a good look at me. I tried hard not to mind them, for I knew how queer I must seem to them; and I thought of how we Britishers, in much the same way, mob any special hero or heroine. But, notwithstanding my efforts not to feel disconcerted, the annoyance gained on me, and at last I put on a very grave look, and turning round slowly, almost solemnly, faced them, raised my hand, and pointing towards their village, said quietly, but with emphasis, 'Go!' The effect was magical. They did not stop to 'go,' they simply fled, tumbling over one another in their wild haste to get away. Then, for a time, I had a little peace, and a thoroughly happy hunt for shells along the shore.

## in Central Africa

The mountains and lake looked very beautiful in the afternoon sunshine, and as I sat on an old boat taking in the scenery around me, I revelled in the thought of being there by myself, such an immense distance from home, and abandoned myself to peaceful reverie. But this peaceful meditation was not to last long. Presently I heard a subdued murmuring, as of human voices, and looking round I saw that the curiosity of the crowd had overcome their fears, and that they had returned to watch me. This time, as I could not find it in my heart to send them away again, I made the girls come and show me all their wonderful bangles and ornaments. Their copper-wire bangles were beautifully made from native copper, which they manufacture themselves. They draw it out into the finest possible wire, which they twist on hair. The drawing of the wire is cleverly done. The men cut a hole through a tree, into which they put a

## A White Woman

piece of iron with a small hole in it. The strip of copper is tapered to a point and put through the hole in the iron. The natives catch hold of the end with a kind of pincers, then a good number of them hang on to it and pull it through. This process is repeated through smaller holes in the iron again and again till the wire is fine enough. Each of six girls gave me one of these bangles, another gave me one of copper and brass finely twisted, and another, one of copper and iron. They are all beautifully made, and the wire is extremely fine and flexible. Of course, when I got back to the house, I gave the girls beads in exchange.

There happened to be a full moon while I was at Kituta, and that is always the time for a grand native dance. When we heard the drums beginning, off we went to look on. The men had coloured themselves with red, white and yellow powder, and looked hideous. They



## in Central Africa

formed a large circle, and danced, shouted and waved axes, spears and knobkerries; while four men stood in the centre, wildly beating two large drums with their hands. In their dance they jumped up in the air every now and then and came down with a tremendous thud on the ground; and all of them moved their muscles in a wonderful way and went through marvellous contortions. They were dancing a very exciting war dance, and how they managed to escape injuring each other severely was a puzzle to me. The excitement became greater as the dance went on, and long after we left them we heard the noise of the drums and the shouting; indeed, it lasted far into the night.

I stayed four or five days at Kituta, and enjoyed the rest, and some lovely expeditions into the surrounding country. When I set off on my return journey I was attended for quite a distance by the girls and women of the village, who ran

## A White Woman

by the side of the machila, laughing and chattering in the friendliest manner.

All the carriers had been engaged the night previous to my departure, and their loads apportioned, and for once I was able to make an early start. I was anxious to do so, on account of the long, steep climb up from the lake, which would have been very trying to do later in the day. Accordingly, we set off soon after seven; but I did not much like the look of some of the machila boys or of the 'tenga-tenga;' and before I had gone very far, I heard a great row going on. The capitao came up to me gesticulating violently, and dancing about in great excitement. But his excitement was such that I could not in the least understand what was the matter. I thought that possibly he wanted me to do something, and I tried various things without success. As I could not discover the cause of the disturbance, and as my boy was nowhere to be seen, I walked on

## in Central Africa

in despair and left them to settle the matter as best they could. It was not until I reached the mission station that night that I discovered that two of the men had put down their loads and run away, and the capitao had had to make the other men carry their loads in addition to their own. I made it all right with those who had carried the extra loads, and I got two more men; but they were all rather tiresome, and not nearly so amusing as my former men had been. I was not sorry to get to Mwenzo again and to change them.

This time I stayed for a few days at Kawimbe, and was much interested in the natives and their work. They find a quantity of ironstone, and smelt it in curious little erections that I thought were made for storing grain: They are small, round buildings like wide chimneys, about six feet high and two to three feet in diameter, made of fire-hardened clay. The ground inside is hollowed out and lined with clay,

## A White Woman

to the side of the machila, laughing and  
whistling in the funniest manner.

All the natives had been engaged the  
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## A White Woman

and the iron is put in it. The fires, which are made of charcoal, are blown up by air from the goatskin bellows, to which are attached clay tubes through which the air passes into the furnace. All the spears, hoes, axes and knives are their own make, and very strong and well-made they are, and possess good edges.

While I was staying at Kawimbe, on September 15, the first rain fell. We had heard distant thunder for several days, and the clouds had looked very threatening. At last we had two very heavy showers. As I went on my journey afterwards, I was astonished at the difference that a little rain had made to the look of the country; flowers seemed to be springing up all about, and the rain had brought out the brilliant tints of the young leaves.

At Kawimbe I had a good opportunity of seeing the natives play a curious game, which is a favourite pastime in Nyasaland. I could not make it out at all, though I often watched them play. They make

## in Central Africa

two rows of holes in the ground, about sixteen holes in each row, then they chuck pieces of stone into the holes, and pick them out again, till, finally, one boy grabs them all. Only two boys play at it at once. Another favourite game that I saw them playing was, spinning very tiny tops, about the size of acorns. They made a smooth, square place with a low rim round it, and the game seemed to consist in throwing in a spinning-top in such a way that it knocked the opponent's out. It seemed to be a very exciting game, and there were always plenty of onlookers, and much shouting and noise over it.

At Kawimbe the rats in the house were terrible at night. They raced about my room and scampered over my bed in a thoroughly happy manner. I could not sleep at first, but at last I got used to them, and dropped off only to wake up and find a rat with his foot in my ear. One night, at another station, something larger than a rat dropped from the rafters

## A White Woman

on my bed and awoke me. I lighted the candle, and saw it was a lemur. They are lovely little animals, and are covered with thick fur like chinchilla, and have beautiful, large, round eyes. It looked most fascinating; but not being sure what it would do next, I thought I would try to send it out. I opened the door which led on to the verandah, and proceeded gently to drive it out, but, alas! it objected to going, and sprang straight on to my shoulder, gripping my arm with its sharp little teeth, and refusing to let go, till I well pinched its tail. As it turned round to bite my hand, I tossed it out on to the verandah, and shut the door. I had fewer animals in my tent than in a house; but even in my tent I was apt to wake up and find all sorts of creepy, crawly things about my pillow.

Africa, indeed, seems as full of plagues now as it was in the time of Moses. The jigger, or matakynia, is horrible. It is a small flea, that, instead of biting, bores a



## in Central Africa

hole, usually under the toe nail, and lays its eggs there. If not discovered and taken out quickly, it causes ulcers, and all sorts of trouble. The natives, who get plenty of practice, are very clever at taking them out, and do it without causing pain; whereas, if you try to do it yourself, you often make a large hole and a very sore place. For a long time I escaped the pest, but at last fell a victim like everyone else. The Arabs are supposed to have brought the matakynia across from the west coast, and it has gradually spread to Chinde, and, indeed, all over B. C. Africa. Then there is a sort of bluebottle fly that penetrates through your clothes, and kindly lays its egg in your back; the egg soon becomes a grub, and I saw quite a large one taken out of a child's back. There is, too, a particularly nasty, fat, light-coloured fly, that is said to be blind, and it comes against you with a great flop, and holds on so firmly with its feet that it is difficult to get rid of it.

## A White Woman

On my return journey from Mambwe to Mwenzo, I found the road had been altered in two places by the Boundary Commissioners, and I had to go by a longer and much prettier route. The new road was being made, and, indeed, was nearly finished. Making a road is not a very arduous task, when once it has been marked out, as it is only necessary to cut away the scrub and the trees for a certain width. Natives were stationed at each end of the old road where it had been altered, with a note from the Collector, headed, 'To all whom it may concern.' Following these words were orders that on no account were you to go along the old road.

On the way I passed a native wearing as a hat the skin of a zebra's head. I tried to buy it from him, but for some time could not persuade him to part with it. However, while we were camping, he came up again, and the sight of beads and calico proved too much for him, and

## in Central Africa

I became the happy possessor of the skin, which is a very good one.

I always enjoyed the fun of bartering, it is so much more amusing than giving a fixed price in money. At Ikomba I bought a splendid stool belonging to a chief. It was chopped out of a solid piece of wood, and was beautifully polished by use. The owner was sitting on it, and the first thing to be done was to persuade him to rise. Then I picked up the stool and offered him calico; at which he shook his head, and took hold of a leg of the stool. I held on to the other, and made my boy unroll more calico, till at last he gave in. The chief greatly enjoyed the joke, as, of course, I gave him a good deal more than the stool was worth; but I wanted it, as it was quite the best one I had seen. We were mutually happy and satisfied. It will take the old fellow some time to get another stool up to such a high state of polish.

At Mwenzo I stayed two days and

## A White Woman

made a short excursion in the machila, to look at the new boundary which is marked only about three-quarters of an hour from the A. L. C. Station. This was marked by a beacon with a tall pole, which was well fixed in, and from it I could see three or four other beacons on distant hills.

In travelling along the road between Karonga and Kituta, it is interesting to notice how many boys you meet carrying letters. They carry them in a split bamboo stick, and offer them to any European they meet, in case the letter should be for him. The boys run along very quickly with the letters; and no one thinks anything of sending a boy off with a letter or parcel thirty miles or more.

The day I left Ikawa it was intensely hot, and towards afternoon, when my boys were getting tired, we passed six or eight natives walking along without any loads. They began to chaff my boys and jeer and laugh at them. Suddenly, two of them made a rush at the machila pole, pushed

## in Central Africa

my boys away, and ran off with me as fast as they could, up and down steep 'dongas,' so steep, that I should have had to walk down them with the greatest care. The rest of them came alongside, shouted and sang all the time, and, without stopping, a fresh pair took the machila pole, changing as they ran. They kept up this pace for more than an hour, until we came to a stream where there was shelter from the sun. Then they popped me down, and truly thankful I was, for what with the shaking and the laughing, which their conduct had provoked, I was nearly as tired as they were. It was the funniest sight to see my boys running their hardest to keep up, and all streaming with perspiration, but thoroughly enjoying the fun. Of course, this helped us over the ground splendidly, and after a rest we went on more calmly, leaving our lively crew behind.

I tried hard to get someone to show me another way back to Karonga, but I do not

## A. White Woman

think my carriers approved of the idea, for, at each village, they told me no one knew such a way; and, finally, I gave up trying, for it was too hot to worry, and I did not want to spoil the pleasure of my journey.

One day I witnessed another delightfully entertaining scene. We met some native women carrying huge calabashes on their heads, full of pombé, the native beer. My boys stopped one of the girls, and after much talking, she consented to let him put his hand in the jar and take out all he could. It was in the early stages of making, and was thick and rather solid; accordingly he plunged his hand in and drew it out full. His arm, nearly up to the elbow was thickly covered with pombé, and when the others saw it, they rushed at him and began to lick his arm, while he ate what he had in his hand. It was the queerest sight I had ever seen, and they most thoroughly enjoyed it, laughing and shouting all the time.

## in Central Africa

The last day we journeyed by a different route to the one I had taken on my way up. It lay through Mlosi's village, where, quite recently, there had been a good deal of fighting. The skulls and bones of the killed had all been thrown into an enclosed piece of ground, which the natives are now afraid to go near, because they believe there are spooks there. The old village had been completely burnt, but already a good many new huts had been put up.

When, at last, I reached Karonga again, I had a most hearty and kindly welcome, and all were interested in hearing of my adventures. I was astonished to find so many Englishmen there, and then I was told that the telegraph line had just reached Karonga, and that they were getting it into working order. While I was there the first message was sent off.

## CHAPTER IX

### FROM KARONGA THROUGH GERMAN KONDELAND.

As I was going into the house at Karonga, I was horrified to hear most melancholy groans. I was told, in answer to enquiries, that the night before an Indian servant had been brought in after having been terribly mauled by a lion. One of the B. S. A. officials, who was camping in the hills some distance from Karonga, had been told that there were lions about, and had ordered good fires to be kept blazing, and the men to be on the lookout. The men were sitting in a circle round the fire, and this Indian, whose groans I had heard, was sitting inside the circle close to the fire, when the lion suddenly sprang over the men, seized him and sprang back



## A White Woman in Central Africa

again. He yelled terrifically, and when the officer, on hearing the screams, rushed out of his tent, he saw the lion standing with the man in his mouth, looking actually scared at the noise the Indian was making. They all charged the lion with burning sticks, and he dropped his prey and fled. The Indian was carried down to the A. L. C. Station, and was cared for with the greatest kindness by the agent. It requires more than ordinary skill and kindness to attend properly anyone who has been bitten by a lion, as the wounds are terribly disagreeable and nasty to dress. The poor man used to scream with fright when he fell asleep, and his illness was long and tedious, but ultimately he got quite well again.

As I had been disappointed in my journey to the north of Lake Tanganyika, and had, consequently, returned sooner than I intended, I decided to spend a fortnight or three weeks at the north of Lake Nyasa, in German Kondeland, which part

## A White Woman

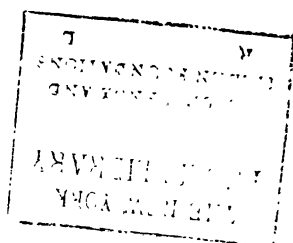
of the country, I was told, was very lovely and very little visited. This I found to be quite true, and during the whole time I was there I never saw any European except the missionaries. At present no traders go there, and the missionaries are very thankful to be left so much alone.

In preparation for going to Kondeland, I had to get a fresh lot of carriers and provisions. All being ready, I set out on September 30th. I started soon after eight a.m., and was told I should reach Ipiana that evening. The distance was really too great to get over comfortably in one day, and I had one or two battles on the way with my boys. Accordingly, I did not arrive until six p.m., and I was much amused to find that our first stop was at a place where there were a number of German sausage trees—clearly a sign we were approaching German territory. The fruit is curiously like a German sausage; it is very thick, eighteen inches or more in length, and hangs from the branch by



SAUSAGE TREE.

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a thin stalk quite three feet in length. The fruits are very heavy, and the only use that I saw them put to was as seats and pillows for the natives. I broke one open, but found only a sort of white pith inside and some unripe seeds. It was useless to attempt to bring it home, which was disappointing, as I should have liked to show it to my friends. I was told afterwards that the natives sometimes cook and eat the seeds when ripe; but I do not think they cared much for them. The flower was fairly handsome, of a deep maroon colour, and somewhat like the hibiscus in shape.

For several hours our way took us close to the edge of the lake, and most of the time the boys preferred walking in the water, as the sand there was firmer, and, of course, it was cooler to their feet. Also, it was pleasanter for me in my machila, and the splashing of the water made by the feet of my carriers sounded delightfully refreshing. The

## A White Woman

colour of the lake was lovely—a bright deep blue. A good deal of the sand at the north end was quite black and sparkled in the sunshine; and there was a quantity of pumice lying about—remains of once active volcanoes, of which there are several in that part of the country. A little before two o'clock we came to the Songwe River. This appeared to be difficult to cross, as there was a great deal of water in it, and the banks were very steep. My boy came up to me and said we must camp where we were for the night. I asked if it were 'Ipiana,' to which he replied, 'Oh, no; that is much too far.' However, I had been told we ought to get there, and I insisted that they must take me on. After a good deal of talk among the natives, preparations were made to cross the river. Some of the boys got down into the water and held the machila, while I scrambled down the bank and

## in Central Africa

got in, not a very easy matter. Then I had to cling to the pole with my hands and feet, so as to raise myself as high above the water as possible. Then the boys hoisted the pole on to their heads, instead of carrying it on their shoulders, and the rest held up the hammock part of the machila well under me to keep it out of the water. This was up to the men's waists, and the stream was fairly strong. It was not a very easy matter to get me across, but they managed it splendidly. I felt very thankful at the time that no one was about with a kodak to take a snap shot, though now I should rather like to have one as a memento.

At the next village we came to, the boys made another attempt to stop; but as I persisted that we were to go to Ipiana, and refused to get out of the machila, they went on again. For a time they were very cross, and bumped and banged me against every

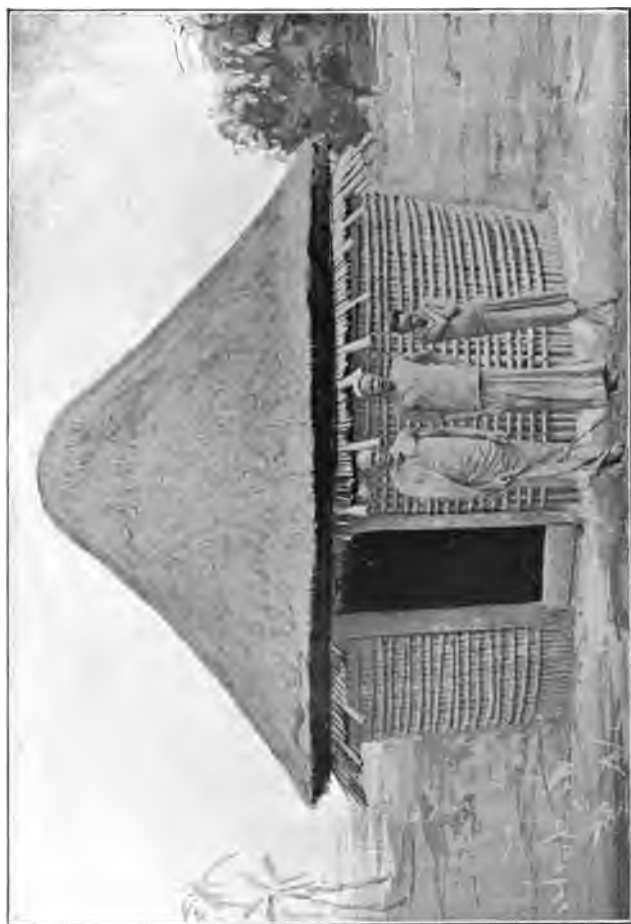
## A White Woman

tree stump and rock that we had to pass. I said nothing, but waited till they seemed in a happier frame of mind, and then got out and walked a good distance to give them a rest.

After crossing the Songwe, it was one succession of villages, banana groves, and cultivated patches all the way to Ipiana. The villages were the nicest I had seen. The huts were beautifully built, well thatched, neat and well kept; they were almost hidden in banana groves, and in each village grew tall trees with dark leaves that made a splendid shade. The natives of that part, the Wnkonde, are the least warlike of any of the tribes, and are more given to agriculture. Also, they are very fond of decorative art.

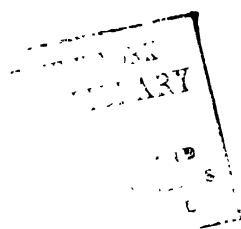
At last we came to another river, the Kabira, and for some time could not find any place where we could cross. We were just opposite the mission station at Ipiana, and presently





WINKONDE HUT.

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the people there heard my boys shouting, and came out to tell us where to find the ford. We had to go a long way up the river to it, and then had to repeat the performance at the Songwe. Both rivers are full of crocodiles, and the natives do not care to go in, unless there are a good many of them together; then they make so much noise and splashing, that there is no danger at all from the 'crocs.'

About six p.m. we reached Ipiana, and again I had a very kind and hearty reception from the missionaries, who were full of astonishment at my travelling alone. Two married missionaries and their wives were living there; indeed, it seems to be the rule among the Germans (and a good one too) always to have two married couples on a station, as they consider it too lonely for one. To save the boys the trouble of putting up my tent, as they had had a long day, my bed was put into an empty room. This had a

## A White Woman

door which opened in two halves, above and below, like a village shop door. I fastened it as firmly as I could and was soon sound asleep. I had not been asleep long when I was awakened by a noise. Looking up, I saw that the upper half of the door was open, and sitting on the under half, in the moonlight, which streamed in, was an awful-looking animal, seemingly just ready to jump into the room. I yelled and threw a pillow at it, but before the pillow reached the door the animal had vanished. I do not suppose it was anything more than a wild cat; but waking up suddenly and seeing it in the moonlight, it had all the horror of the unknown. I did not feel very happy about going to sleep again; but while I was arranging to keep awake, I dozed off, and did not open my eyes again until my boy came in the morning, to bring me a delicious cup of tea with milk in it.

I spent the morning in strolling about the village and watching the people.

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Many of their implements and ornaments were very different from those I had seen before. The women wore a curious head-band, made of a piece of dried banana leaf, dyed in patterns, and tied round their heads with the bow in front.

One of the German missionaries was a naturalist, and a most interesting man. He was collecting specimens for the Berlin Museum, and I spent a delightful evening looking over his beetles, butterflies, and snakes. They were most admirably prepared, and very neatly put up. Each label gave the name of the species, and when and where it had been found. I spent two very happy days at Ipiana, and heard a great deal that was full of interest for me, about the country and the natives I was going to visit. My carriers, meantime, had had a good rest; and when I wanted to start, they were quite cheerful and ready to go forward. We had to cross the Kabira River again

## A White Woman

in the same style as before, we reached our camping place in Mwantipura about two-thirty p.m. The carriers with the loads had gone on first, and, to my delight, on arriving, I found the tent up and the kettle boiling, ready for tea. The boys were always intensely amused at the pleasure I displayed when I found that tea was ready. It puzzled them very much to know why I liked it, for when they tasted it, it gave them no pleasure at all. While camping here I noticed that the fashionable head-dress for the young natives of this part was made of bunches of brown cock-feathers, tied on to a sharp-pointed piece of wood and stuck in the hair. I had a delightful captao with this lot of boys, and he was very good at getting me queer ornaments, and anything that took my fancy.

The Kabira winds so much, that next day we had to cross it again, so that we got quite used to the performance. Soon after crossing it for the last time, we came

## in Central Africa

to a large swamp, crusted all round with salt. It was amusing to see the eagerness with which they collected as much salt as they could, and licked their hands so as not to lose a grain.

The process of extracting the salt from the earth, which is employed by the natives, is interesting. They take the earth from the dried bed of a lake or stream, and put it into curious funnels, shaped like a tun-dish, which are made of bamboo or closely-woven grass rope. Then they pour water over the salt earth and stir it up. The water drains through the funnels into the pots below, and is then boiled or evaporated in the sun until only cakes of salt are left. They also extract salt from plants as well as from the earth. Salt is an article which all the natives value highly. My boys often used to come in the evening to beg a little salt to put in their food.

Most of the morning, after passing the swamp, we went through forest, broken

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## in Central Africa

square-shaped native hut. One piece of the rock overhung and looked exactly like the thatch. The natives have many legends about it, and it is quite a landmark. The boys plunged into the water in an instant, to have a good wash and bathe. Then we set off again with a big climb before us, for the hills seemed never ending, and when we reached the top of one ridge, it was only to find that we had to go down and then climb another still higher. All the way the views were beautiful, and when, finally, we reached the highest point, there was compensation for our exertions in the glorious view that we obtained. We could see the river winding along among wooded hills and valleys, and, in the far distance, was the glisten of Lake Nyasa.

The boys always seemed pleased when I enjoyed the view; and they always pointed out what they thought interesting. At one place they drew my attention to a curious natural stone bridge, that looked

## A White Woman

like masonry—smooth and well built on one side, but very rough on the other. The natives say the people who live on the smooth side are good workmen, the others are bad. They had many more tales about it, but my English-speaking boy could not understand much of their language, as they came from a different part of the country; moreover, he was not equal to much translations, as he only knew the most ordinary English words and sentences.

We had not seen a village all the day after leaving Mwantipura quite early, and when at last we reached one we were glad to camp and rest, as we had had a hard, though a very enjoyable, journey. This village, like most of them in Kondeland, was surrounded by banana plantations, and I was able to get plenty of the fruit, which, either cooked or raw, made a pleasant change in my rather monotonous bill of fare.

We did not start very early next

## in Central Africa

morning, but before mid-day we reached Rutenganyo, another mission station. Again there were two married couples, and I had the usual kind reception. They were very much puzzled about the way I had come. We had clearly taken a different route from the one the missionaries knew; but if longer, it had probably been much more lovely, and I came to the conclusion that, though my boys had a great knack of always choosing the wrong path, they had an eye for fine scenery. From each village a number of paths diverge. Whenever we came to a place where the road divided, the boys, as soon as they had decided which road to take, drew a line, or put the branch of a tree across the other, in order to show the carriers who were following which way we had gone.

The further we got north the cleverer the natives seemed to be. At Otengule, the big chief, 'Merere,' used to have a quantity of good linen work done by the

## A White Woman

women of his tribe; but, unfortunately, Merere could not get on with the Germans, and he and his people left that part of the country. At present there is no more of this useful work being done, and it is difficult to get good specimens. I have one that is an excellent sample of their weaving. They used to make their own looms in a very primitive fashion, sticking pieces of wood in the ground, fastening the thread to them, working a roughly-made shuttle backwards and forwards. They grew the cotton, and made their own thread, the patterns and the dyes. Basket-work, too, they were very clever at, and it was so firmly done, that milk or water could be carried in the baskets without a drop being lost. Many of the natives, for carrying milk, use bamboo, ornamented with painting or carving. Some of their patterns are very effective, and well done. Over the top they stretch a piece of banana leaf, like a piece of bladder, to keep out flies and other insects.

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Another station that I came to was 'Rungwe.' It is in a very volcanic part of the country, just at the foot of the Rungwe Mountain, an extinct volcano, which must have been extremely active once, for it is quite easy to trace where the streams of lava ran down. Some of the lava tracks are overgrown with grass, while, in other places, the black lava is plainly visible above the ground. A cutting shows the dark volcanic dust at the top, and ashes and pumice below. The ground, owing to its volcanic origin, was of course very dry and dusty, and a thorough system of irrigation had to be constructed in the garden at the mission station, in order to get good crops. By this means they contrived to grow most of the home vegetables, and plenty of strawberries, which were small, but good.

A short distance away from Rungwe, I had an extremely pretty view of the station, with its church, its schoolhouse

## A White Woman

and outbuildings. The whole journey that day was delightful; up and down steep gullies and across noisy rushing streams, the banks of which were covered with maidenhair and other ferns. There was hardly a level piece of ground all the way. We crossed one stream where the water tasted just like 'Selters Wasser.' I walked most of the way, as it was very steep, and much too interesting to ride through in a machila.

At the village near to which I camped for the night, there was a great beating of drums and a general uproar. After I had had my tea, I went on a tour of inspection, and found a very grand dance going on—a larger one than I had yet seen—and the natives were most wonderfully dressed up. About one hundred men were dancing, holding in their hands their well-polished spears and axes, and having splendidly bright copper manyetas round their waists. Their bodies had been well rubbed with oil, and most of them had

## in Central Africa

tufts of feathers in their hair. Two had very high plumes of black cock's feathers standing up quite two feet above their heads ; another had a fringe of cow's teeth plaited into his hair ; others, again, had their faces, backs and legs coloured red, grey, yellow and white. The children, too, were similarly decorated. It was a wonderful dance. They pranced about on their toes, and wriggled after the usual fashion, then, while some were dancing, surprise parties crept out of the banana grove and sprang on them, producing a general scrimmage ; and while this was going forward others, again, stole away and came springing back with wild yells and shrieks. As time went on the dance got wilder, and fresh parties joined in the festivity from time to time. How it was that nobody was hurt, seeing that they all carried their spears, is more than I can tell. The singing was wonderful, sometimes very wild, sometimes very musical, and occasionally reminded me of

## A White Woman

some of Wagner's choruses. Long after I was in my tent the noise continued, and I was beginning to think, with horror, that it would last all night, when suddenly the singing and shrieking and howling rose with a violent crescendo, and the next moment ceased altogether. It was the last flourish—the finale—and in the silence that followed I could hear the patter of their feet as they instantly turned and flew off homewards.

The next day the way was even more difficult, and I wondered much how the boys with the loads managed to get up and down some of the declivities. The machila carriers had awkward work in taking me across the streams; the stones were exceedingly slippery, and the water rushed with considerable force. But, except in crossing streams, they did not have much work to do for me, as I preferred walking and stopping to look about me.

The views of the Livingstone range were very fine. The station I was going







**BAMBOO BRIDGE.**

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to, Makarere, was at the foot of the mountains, and from a distance had a most picturesque appearance. From the valley below Makarere to the top of the range is one succession of peaks, mountain after mountain; and at sunset, and in the early morning, the lights and shadows on the mountains are very lovely. Around Makarere the flowers were coming out fast, and the 'Kaffir Boom' trees were one blaze of scarlet. About here I saw a large tree with dark green leaves that bore a fruit in shape like a pine-apple. This fruit, however, was very sour, though refreshing; and each little division in it had a stone. I stayed at Makarere—one of the most beautiful places I have seen—two whole days, in order to give my boys a good rest and to enjoy the place myself. I engaged another lot of machila boys during the time I was there, for local excursions, and went with them on some lovely expeditions. These boys were used to the hills, and rushed me up and

## A White Woman

down them at break-neck speed. One charming picnic I had in company with the missionaries was at a deep gorge, through which the Lufirio River rushes, winding between high-wooded mountains. There was a wonderful old bamboo bridge across this river, and I did not much enjoy going over it, as I had to cross alone. It shakes too much if two are on it at the same time. As an inducement to cross, they promised me breakfast on the other side, so, with fear and trembling, I got across, and then we sat in a cool, shady spot, and during our meal watched enormous eagles hovering overhead. They are said to carry off sheep and small children, and they looked to me quite equal to doing it. In the trees were very handsome, but very savage-looking, monkeys, with long black hair, a white ruff round their necks, and very long tails with white tips.

On another day we went to some lovely waterfalls on the Lufirio and the Matesi; the two rivers make almost an island of the



**DESCENDING BAMBOO BRIDGE.**

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## in Central Africa

station. Had I had time, I might have made any number of beautiful excursions among the mountains, but, unfortunately, I could not gratify my wishes in this respect. About Makarere there are a great many bees. The natives put boxes in the trees for them, and in that way get plenty of honey. Of this they are very fond; and they make what is considered a very delicious kind of beer from honey and water fermented. Cows were plentiful, too, so that this part of Africa might truly be called 'a land flowing with milk and honey.' The cows have a hump like the Indian cattle, and they are made to carry bells roughly made of native iron. The sound, as the animals moved about, reminded me of the 'ranz des vaches' in a Swiss valley. The cows are brought up and stalled for the night in long grass huts. There were also numbers of goats and sheep, the latter having broad, fat tails, which sometimes weigh as much as nine and even twelve pounds.

## A White Woman

At the mission station there was one little white boy, the son of the missionary. He was about four years old, and it was the prettiest sight possible to see him marching along attended by five or six little black boys, his most devoted admirers, who patiently followed him wherever he went, and were only too delighted when he permitted them to do anything for him.

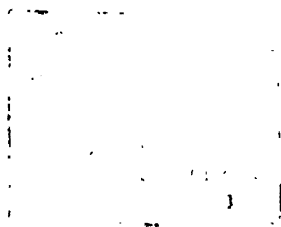
The only new thing I noticed in use among the natives here was a curious stick which the women use in walking. It has a top like a shepherd's crook and is only used by women. It was so beautiful at Makarere, that I was very much disinclined to leave. It was with many regrets, but with many pleasant memories, that I at length resumed my journey. The Livingstone Mountains are not volcanic; but soon after leaving them I began to get into volcanic country again, and I passed some very deep sulphur pits, all overgrown with lovely ferns. At one of





GOATS GOING TO BED.

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these the boys stopped for me to get out of my machila, and listen to 'the noise the devil was making down there;' that was how my boy translated their statement. Soon after that we crossed a very dreary-looking black lava field. The lava had come down from Kiedyo, an extinct volcano near to Mano, where I stayed.

The country all round Mano was in marked contrast with the well-wooded district round the Livingstone Mountains. At Mano there are good views, but they are over mountains that are quite bare. At a little distance from the mission station there is a large lake in a deep hollow among the bare-looking hills. The lake is nearly square, and is very deep. The natives say that the fish in it have hair on their heads. Unfortunately, they did not seem willing to try to catch any while I waited, though they knew that I should very much have liked to see some. The legend about the lake is, that one of the gods came and asked for water at a village,

## A White Woman

but the people said they could not be bothered, and that he must get it himself. But a widow and her son brought him some, and then, sending them off to a safe place, he told the others that as they said they had a difficulty in finding water, they should now have plenty. Upon this the water rushed in from all sides, swamped the village, and formed the lake Kyungulalu. The legend sounds like a version of the story of the Flood.

At the place where I stopped for breakfast, I was told there was a wonderful dancer. I requested him to give me a performance, and a very funny one it was. He crept along almost like a serpent, stepped about on the tips of his toes, wriggled and waved his spear most curiously. The natives have marvellously lithe bodies, and seem able to twist themselves about in any shape or way.

When I started on again a crowd of at least fifty women and children escorted me for quite a long distance, running by the

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side of the machila laughing and talking all the time. I learnt a very curious thing here, namely, that if you beckon to a native in the way we do, he will run away instead of coming to you. The native way of beckoning is to point your fingers towards the earth and to pull them towards you. In counting, a native puts his finger to his lips for one, and again for two. He holds up three fingers for three, and for four, two fingers of each hand. Five, is the hand closed with the thumb poking out between the second and third fingers, and ten is the two closed fists on the top of each other.

The natives tell the time, of course, by the sun. If I asked them when I should arrive at a camping place, they pointed to the position the sun would be in at that time, and they were always wonderfully correct. One day, for a joke, I pointed to where I thought the sun would be, a performance which they hailed with shouts of laughter, as I had inadvertently pointed

## A White Woman

to the wrong side, *i.e.*, the east, instead of to the west—a mistake no native would ever be guilty of making.

On our journey, we came upon three more lakes, some distance apart, and all hidden away in the forest. They were very deep down, with high banks all round. One afternoon we had to cross a pool and then a swamp, where the water was very black. There were dark trees all round, and the ground had been trampled by large animals, hippos or rhinos. The jungle was very nasty to get through, there was so much bamboo grass and prickly stuff, all dripping wet, as if there had been rain, or very heavy dew. It was the first time I had been wet through, and I did not like it. I was obliged to walk, as they could not possibly get the machila through with me in it. The carriers had to turn and twist it about in many ways in order to get through. We next came to the Mbaka River, which winds so much that we had to cross it

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three times. Its banks were very steep, but I was getting well used to scrambling down and getting into the machila, while it hung over the water.

At last, after a fortnight's wandering, I got back to Ipiana, and stayed two nights, in order to give my boys a rest, pack a few curios, and relate my adventures to the missionaries. Then I set off for Karonga, taking on my way back a different route, which led by 'Ngerenge. It was a longer and a more tiring way for the boys than that by which we had come, as it lay for a considerable distance through soft sand. But though I twice suggested that we should camp for the night, if they were tired, they declared they could quite easily get back to Karonga, and wished to do so. Of course, they were in much better practice at walking and carrying than they had been at the beginning of the fortnight, and there was a difference going from home and returning to it, which difference was in their favour.

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They got me to Karonga about half-past six o'clock, running, shouting and singing during the last part of the journey as if they had only just started.

It seemed like home to get back to Karonga, as it was my third visit there, and the natives and Britishers had got quite used to seeing me about, and almost considered me as belonging to the place. I received a present there of some crocodile eggs, and was told a lovely tale about them. One day one of the telegraph men met a native with a fine lot of eggs that looked clean and fresh and were unusually cheap. So he had them sent to his tent, and told his boy to cook them. The boy usually cooked eggs extremely well, but these came to table looking rather disagreeable. However, the Englishman and his friend ate away and enjoyed them, though they thought the eggs had a peculiar flavour. Next day the boy was reproved for cooking them so badly, and was told to do the remainder better. The



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boy said he could not, and when asked why, replied that 'those eggs were croc's, not hen's eggs, and will never look nice when cooked.' The horror of the poor men who had eaten them was great, and the boy was not required to try his skill on the remainder.

I had a busy time for some days in packing all my treasures, which I was sending by steamer down the lake. Then I finally took leave of Karonga, and all who had been so kind to me there, and with another team I set off for Kondowe, Dr Laws's Mission Station.

## CHAPTER X

### KARONGA TO KONDOWE

WHEN I left Karonga on this occasion, I had a very poor set of carriers, Wnkonde boys. There were very few to be had, as a great many had been taken for the telegraph works, the Boundary Commission, and other expeditions. The Wnkonde are bad machila carriers, but I had to be satisfied and thankful that I could get any at all to take me. I did not wish to wait longer at Karonga, as I feared I might miss seeing Dr Laws, who was thought to be going on an expedition into the country just about that time.

I started early in the morning, but the boys dragged along very slowly through the soft sand, and when we stopped for

## A White Woman in Central Africa

a mid-day rest one of them put down his load and departed. I got another boy to replace him quite easily, but they all went very badly, and seemed to find it such hard work that, when we camped for the night, I determined to get two more to help. Accordingly, I told the capitao to ask the chief of a neighbouring village to let me have two boys to go on with me next morning. He did so, but returned from the village saying that the chief would not let me have any. I told him that was nonsense. I must have them and of course was willing to pay for them. However, he returned again, saying that the chief quite refused to send any. I told him to show me the chief and I would speak to him myself. My boy wished to come with me, saying, 'I could not make the chief understand, as he did not know my language;' but I told him to stay where he was, and off I marched alone to try the effect of a little English.

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Arrived at the village, I walked very solemnly up to the chief, held up two fingers, and told him he must get me two boys at once. To my joy and amazement he went off promptly and brought back two capital boys, who helped well all the rest of the way. I gave the old chief some salt as a present, and we parted excellent friends. My boy was much astonished at my success, and wanted to know how I managed it, as 'behold the chief, he speak not English.' I preserved a discreet silence, and did not divulge the secret. Indeed, I could not have told it had I wished.

The road was better next day, there was not so much heavy sand, and the boys were happier, and things went more cheerfully and well. I travelled for some distance along the road, which had been cut for the telegraph line, and met one of the telegraph men bringing back to Karonga the last party of natives who had been working on the

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line. They were carrying all their ladders, implements, etc. He was much amused at meeting me, and said I was the first white woman he had seen for an age, and he could hardly remember when he had last seen a starched collar. I was greatly delighted at that being noticed, as it was the last one I possessed, and my general appearance was now so forlorn-looking, that that morning I had felt obliged to put on my last outward and visible sign of respectability—a clean collar. My boy had done all my washing, and cotton blouses did not look too beautiful after his way of ironing. He spread a mat on the ground, smoothed out the clothes as well as he could on it, then spread a towel or something large over them, and slid his feet up and down till he thought the smoothing process was complete. He then hung the clothes in the sun to dry, and when dry they were ready to put on. It was a very simple process, and quite enough

## A White Woman

for most things ; but I had not as suitable an outfit as I could have wished for. I had, of course, no idea, even when I left Chinde, that I should be so long in the wilds.

In one of the villages we passed through, the women were busy making pottery. They pound the dark red bark of a tree, mix it with hot water and spread it over the baked pottery while hot. When the pot is cold it has a good red brown glaze outside. Round the neck of the pot they make a very pretty border, the pattern of which is marked out with a piece of stick. The inside usually has a good black glaze.

On our way we saw a good many baobab trees. One of them was enormous. As it was on the line of the telegraph, the branches had all been cut off, but the trunk, on account of its size, was left standing. There was a quantity of the fruit lying about, which my boys were glad to pick up, and when we got down





STORE AT KONDOWE.

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to the lake again, we had nice refreshing drinks of water flavoured with the cream-of-tartar acid of the fruit.

The road we traversed on the day before reaching Kondowe was very hilly, and finally became tremendously steep. I felt as if they were taking me up the side of a house—not a pleasant feeling when you are lying in a hammock with your head down hill. The first chance I had I got out and walked the rest of the way. In the heat the climb was somewhat trying, and I was glad to hold one end of a stick and let a native do a bit of pulling at the other end. It was a good help up the steepest places. Of course, I stopped frequently to admire the view over the lake, which really was very beautiful. The plateau at the top of this ascent was very varied, and on it were hills, some of which might be called mountains.

It is only four years since Dr Laws received permission to settle on this

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station, yet it is wonderful to observe what he has accomplished in the time. But of course there is much still to be done before it is all that he has planned, and wishes it to be. He and his wife have been in B. C. A. for twenty-five years. He understands the natives, and they thoroughly respect and trust him—which is what the natives should always be able to do to the white man. But there are obstacles in the way, and besides other evils there is often too much 'diplomacy' in our dealings with them. They are led to believe one thing when another is meant, a thing which, when found out, destroys their faith in us.

Dr Laws is a doctor of medicine as well as a missionary—a combination which always seems to have good results. At Kondowe there were two excellent trained nurses, and when I arrived they were greatly excited, as they had just had a most delightful adventure with a lion. They had been nursing

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a case some distance off, and, on their return journey, started one morning very early from their camp. When they had gone some distance, one of the nurses, who was in front, was stopped by the natives who were with her, saying, 'Lion! lion!' And sure enough the growl of a lion was heard not very far away.

One of the missionaries, who had gone out to meet them and bring them home, quickly got his gun ready, and together with the nurse and some of the natives, who were armed with spears and sticks, went in search of the lion. They followed the growling sound for some time, but when that ceased, they could not tell whereabouts in the long grass the lion was, and they decided to give up the search and turn back. The lion had evidently been watching them, for the moment they turned, out he came with a great bound. At first they took to their heels, but when he was about thirty yards off they turned and faced him,

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which brought him to a standstill. Quick as thought the man with the gun shot him, and over he went into the long grass. As they could not tell if he were killed or only wounded, the nurse, at the suggestion of the natives, climbed into a tree, while the men went cautiously in search of the wounded beast. Presently they found his spoor. He was evidently badly wounded, as he was dragging himself along. But on hearing the roar of another lion, or, more probably, the lioness, they thought discretion the better part of valour, and returned to the lady up the tree and the rest of their party. The other nurse they found standing with her back to a tree and surrounded by a score or so of natives; she had heard the roars, but had missed the excitement of seeing the lion. They all got back safely to the mission station, and the nurses thoroughly enjoyed telling their story, considering themselves very lucky to have been the heroines of such a thrilling ad-

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venture when they had been less than a year in the country.

While I stayed at Kondowe, the nurses took me some beautiful walks, one to a lovely waterfall, where the water pours over a projecting rock, under which you can walk or sit, and have your tea, as we did. In the same ravine there were a number of cave dwellings, old huts and kraals, hidden away down among the rocks and on the sides, where the natives were living when Dr Laws came to that part. They used to be afraid of the Angoni tribe, who came down and raided them; but now that things are quiet and more orderly, they are living up on the plateau. The remains of the stockade across the narrow entrance to the ravine, and a quaint ladder of monkey ropes twisted about for the natives to climb up and keep a look-out, are still to be seen. The whole ravine was very wild and lovely; glorious maidenhair and other ferns grew all about the rocks, and near the

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waterfall, by which we had tea, was a second, equally beautiful, for each of the two rivers, which join in the valley below, takes a splendid leap over the rocks here.

Another day, the two nurses and I had a delightful expedition to Mount Chiombi. It was about a two hours' ride in a machila to the foot of the mountain, and then we had to climb about three-quarters of an hour in order to reach the top, where we got a lovely view over the lake and the country round. Here there is a large plateau, and we had quite a long walk to the other end of it to see the sphinx—a rock with a perfect resemblance to an African face—looking out east over the lake. I hoped at first it was looking towards the sphinx in Egypt, but, unfortunately, the direction is wrong. The grass on the plateau was very long and dry, so, before coming down, we set it on fire. It burned grandly, and as it became dark there was a glorious blaze, lighting up the whole of the top of the mountain, and making little rivers of fire down the sides.



AFRICAN FACE ON THE ROCK.

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It was the right time of the year for burning the grass, and it caused the new grass to come up beautifully fresh and green afterwards.

One day, much sooner than I could have wished, a messenger came up from the lake to say that the 'Domira' had arrived. There was so much at Kondowe that was interesting to see and hear, and so many delightful walks and expeditions to make, that I was loath to leave; but the steamer was there, and I had to go on board next morning.

On my way to the lake I set off in a machila to the top of the descent, and then had to walk the rest of the way down. It was very rough and steep, and there was so much loose rock and stone, that it was hard to get a foothold, and I soon had an unpleasant tumble. After this I held on to a native. With their bare feet, the natives walk firmly and well. We got down to the lake safely about mid-day, almost melted by the great heat.

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The sun had been shining directly on me the whole way down, and there was not the least bit of shade.

The captain of the 'Domira' had been watching our descent, and had very kindly provided a good supply of tea for us—a service which I highly appreciated. It was pleasant to be back on the old 'Domira' again, and there was a homelike feeling about it too, though, alas! the cockroaches, as well as my 'state room,' were ready for me.

We had rough weather going down the lake. While we were anchored at Kota-Kota, the wind got up so strongly, that all the awnings had to be taken down, and the steamer dragged her anchors three times, the last time landing so firmly on the sand, that it was a difficult business to get her off. On our way we met the A. L. C. steamer, the 'Queen Victoria,' on her first trip. She looked a fine boat, with good passenger accommodation, and was going along at a good pace on her

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way to Karonga. It will make a wonderful difference to have another and a larger steamer on the lake. There is now so much large and heavy cargo to be taken up for the telegraph, besides, of course, an increase in goods and personal belongings for the residents, that a second steamer was much needed.

I was glad to reach Fort Johnston again, and I was much struck by the wonderful additions and improvements that had been made during the few months I had been away. The new house and store for the A. L. C. were finished, and appeared quite fine from the river. Their roofs were painted red—a colour which looks well—and is said to resist the heat very well. Several other houses had just been finished, and the whole place looked neat and well laid out. Excellent roads were being made and trees planted. At first there was an idea of having verandahs only in the front of the houses, but, happily, that idea was abandoned, and

## A White Woman

all have good verandahs which run completely round. The houses are like most European houses, not at all picturesque ; but they would have been positively ugly with a verandah only in front, and the poor inhabitants would have had hot, uncomfortable homes.

The 'Guendolen' was making splendid progress, and I much regretted not being able to stay for the launching ; but the rainy season was coming on, and I had only about eighteen days left in which to catch the steamer at Chinde, if I would reach home in time for Christmas. The water, too, was getting very low ; we just grazed on the two bars as we came out of the lake into the river, and I had to allow time for a chance 'stick' in going down the river to Matope.

It was very hot at Fort Johnston, 106° in the shade, and the mosquitoes were very tiresome, too ; but, in spite of all, I was sorry to leave and to say good-bye to the kind and hospitable friends there. I was

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the only passenger on the 'Monteith' going down the river. It is a comfortable boat, with good cabins, and I much enjoyed my journey down, and had a peaceful view of all the birds, duck and wildfowl, and a last look at the hippos and crocodiles. We tied up for the night at Liwonde, starting next morning at three a.m., and as that part of the river was new to me, I dressed and went on deck. The moonlight was brilliant, and I could see everything clearly. The river winds a great deal, and some of the turns are so sharp, we had to run into the bank and swing round so as to keep in the channel. The banks are high in some places, and full of the holes of a reed martin, a lovely bird, red and bluish grey in colour. The trees, too, were full of baboons, springing from branch to branch and making their queer noises.

We reached Matope before ten a.m., and, with the kind help of the captain and the A. L. C. agent, I got a machila team and boys to carry my luggage, which had

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of late much increased in weight, and by eleven o'clock I was off again on my way to Blantyre. But the heat! It was almost unbearable. It was something to have made a start, but, at the first water and shade we came to, we stopped and had a good rest. Matope lies very low and flat, and all the heat in the country seems to concentrate there. When I was in the machila, I seemed to be between two fires, the sun shining down, and the heat striking up from the ground. I found it cooler to get out and walk. My shoes protected my feet, but, to the bare feet of the men, the heat was terrible. I tried it with my hand.

We passed on the way numbers of baobab and German sausage trees, and some very tall trees with trunks of a yellowish green, almost sulphur colour. None of the trees had many leaves on, so we got very little shade, except near to water.

We were crawling along very quietly,

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without any singing or shouting, when the same thing happened that I had experienced once before. My boys were Angoni, and not very good carriers, and when we came on eight Yao boys going along without loads, the latter began to laugh at them and tease them. At last, with derisive yells of 'Angoni, Angoni,' the Yaos seized the machila and tore off with me at a furious pace, laughing and shouting all the time, till they came to another stream, and there they popped me down in the shade, and went off for a good wash and a smoke. It had been a splendid help, and the Yao boys seemed perfectly happy, and apparently considered it a great joke. When my boys came up I was able to give them some salt as a present, and this pleased them greatly.

By this time it was getting cooler, but had begun to thunder heavily. The lightning was very brilliant, and fear of a storm made my boys trot on as fast as they could. I quite thought that at last

## A White Woman

I should be caught in a bad storm, but though there was plenty of noise and lightning, very little rain fell. After the sun set, it was very dark till the moon came out of the clouds; I had been wondering how we should get on, as the men stumbled so much over stumps and rocks in the path. However, they pluckily kept going forward, and, just before ten p.m., we reached the mission station at Blantyre. Lights were still in the windows, and I was received with the kindest and heartiest welcome. It had been a long day, as I had been up since three a.m. I was fairly tired, and glad to get a good night's rest.

At Blantyre I had again the delightful feeling of being among old friends, and had much to hear and relate. While staying there we had some heavy storms. One was very curious, it thundered heavily, then down came a furious hail-storm. The stones were enormous, not rounded, but simply rough pieces of ice, and while



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they were falling the thermometer was 98° in the shade.

I had plenty to do and see during a three days' stay which I made at Blantyre, and had to settle up for my journey and pack all my luggage, which I sent to Chinde by river, while I went round by Mlanje and the Ruvo Falls to join the river at Chiromo. This turned out a very beautiful expedition, but a terrible experience. Everything hitherto had gone so well, that I suppose I was careless, and did not make sufficient enquiries and proper arrangements. Altogether, I had trusted too much to luck. It was a long day's journey from Blantyre to Mlanje, and I understood it had been arranged for me to stay at the latter mission station for the night. I started with one team of machila men, and another had been sent on to wait for me half way, and carry me to Mlanje.

I set off very early, and got on all right until I met my new lot of men. As I could not see any signs of men carrying

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bedding or cooking utensils, I concluded that they had gone on, as I should not be likely to want them until the next day. It seemed an interminable journey, and it was not till six-thirty that we arrived at a house. I asked if it were the mission station, but the gentleman who came out looked greatly amused, and said we had come nine miles beyond the mission, and that I had arrived at the house of Mr Moir. He added, also, that he was the manager of the estate, and that Mr and Mrs Moir were away staying up in the mountain. I was in despair. Where my luggage had gone I could not imagine, most probably to the mission station, and it was too far to go back there that night. There was nothing for it but to wait for the things to turn up, and I gladly accepted the manager's hospitable invitation to stay there for the night. The boy, with my own personal belongings, arrived about nine o'clock; but all declared there was no more luggage on the road.

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Rather puzzled as to how I should manage the rest of the journey to Chiromo, I went to my room and was soon asleep.

The journey all day had been across the plain, through pretty country, with lots of bracken and wild asparagus, and we had a grand view of the Mlanje Mountains, which looked lovely in the evening light as we got nearer to them. Mr Moir's house is in a charming situation, just at the foot of the mountain, which is an extinct volcano. The crater is very fine; two peaks, rather like the Matterhorn, form a sort of gateway through which the lava formerly poured, and down which a strong stream of water now rushes.

Mr and Mrs Moir kindly sent to ask me to come and stay with them, in order to enjoy the lovely scenery up the mountain, but as it took a whole day to get to their place, and as I did not want to risk missing my steamer, I had reluctantly to decline their invitation. The Mlanje Mountains are about ten thousand feet high, and on

## A White Woman

the plateau are again other mountains two or three thousand feet high. It is a most splendid health resort, and will in time become much more valued and used.

The coffee plantations on Mr Moir's estate were beautiful. The plants were in full bloom, the flowers at a distance looked like snow against the dark leaves. The scent, too, was delicious.

I saw a horse there that had had an interesting adventure. The manager had brought it up from Durban, being the first person who had successfully brought a horse to that part in spite of the Tsetse fly. It was landed all right at Chiromo, then one evening, after they had camped, something frightened the animal and it broke away with the saddle on its back. The boys followed it for some time, but at last lost it, and had to return to the camp and then on to Mlanje. From there natives were sent out to search for the horse; but it was quite a fortnight before a message reached the manager asking

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him to go and fetch it. When the natives had at last found the animal, it seemed tired out, very hungry and very much frightened. Its saddle was still on, but was turned underneath it. They dared not touch it, for it was the first animal of the kind they had seen; but as it seemed hungry, they gave it a great heap of native corn, and while it was eating that, they put a fence round it, then made a sort of roof to shade it from the sun, and sent off for the owner to come quickly. The horse was a long time before it got over the fright and fatigue, and the sore places caused by the saddle; but when I saw it, it was looking very well and fit.

I arranged to start early the next morning, the manager kindly offering to lend me a camp bed if I would send the boys back with it the next day, which I gladly promised to do. He said I should find a sort of rest-house half-way to Chiromo, where I could stay; so, with a fowl and

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some tea, by way of provisions, I set off, trusting I should manage all right.

The journey was rather pretty, especially where we stopped for the mid-day rest, at the junction of the Ruo and the Luchirio Rivers. The 'rest-house' was reached soon after five o'clock, and turned out to be a corrugated iron shanty, the floor inches thick with dust and wood ashes, and full of natives with their loads. Of course, when I arrived, they all turned out, and while they swept the place and the dust was settling down, I went off to the river and ate sparingly of my chicken. I was very hungry, but the chicken was all I had to eat during the next day. I saved some also, but was so thirsty that, before I could go to sleep, I was tempted to finish it. Having dined, my thoughts turned towards a wash, and then I realised the horrible fact that I had nothing to wash in. I could therefore only paddle about in a rather muddy place in the stream, and wash my face and hands after a fashion.

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On the whole, I succeeded in making myself more wet than clean. The mosquitoes were more pleased to have me there than I was to stay ; so I wandered back to my uncomfortable home.

I woke up pretty early next morning, had the bedding packed, and sent it back with a grateful message. I should indeed have been miserable without it. Then having had another apology for a wash, I thought about having my breakfast. I unwrapped the chicken carefully, and 'behold,' as my boy used to say, it was black with ants. I tossed it to the boys, who thought that I only wanted the ants removed. Accordingly, after much blowing and shaking they brought it back to me. But I generously presented it to them! Hungry as I was, I could not bring myself to eat that piece of chicken, and I was left to regret the economy I had practised in saving it from my meal the night before. I was now without anything to eat, nor could I get anything to drink, as I was

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afraid to drink the water in the stream without having first boiled it.

The whole of our journey that day was through very pretty country; up and down hill, through bush, and often near the river. But, of course, there was not much shade, the leaves not being fully out yet. By half-past ten the ground was so hot that the boys could not go on any longer, and we had to stop. Where we stopped there was an old grass hut, and I lay outside in what shade there was, the boys bringing me calabashes of water from the river to cool my head and wrists. They, lucky mortals! went and sat in the river, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We stayed there until about four o'clock, and then set off again. The Ruo Falls were not far from the grass hut, and were very fine and well worth a visit. A journey from Chiromo to see them makes a very pleasant excursion.

We reached Chiromo about six o'clock, and when I got to the A. L. C. house, I felt



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exceedingly tired, and could hardly speak. The heat had been intense all day, and I had not had anything to drink; however, a bath and innumerable cups of tea soon put me right again. The A. L. C. house at Chiromo was intensely hot even at night, the beds and pillows felt as if they had been run over with an old-fashioned warming-pan. The place was full, no less than fifteen passengers were waiting for the steamers, some of them having been there for a week or longer.

At last two steamers arrived. The first to leave was, of course, packed, and was so uncomfortable, that I thought I would risk my chance of catching the ocean steamer at Chinde, and go down a day later on the second boat. At last, after three days' boiling and baking, the other steamer started, and a very comfortable trip I had down the river. On the way I amused myself by counting up the number of miles I had been in a machila, and found it was well over a thousand miles. During

## A White Woman in Central Africa

the whole journey I had only one fall, and certainly the natives took the greatest possible care of me.

I was fortunate enough to catch the 'Peters' at Chinde; I had only just time to get my luggage and myself on board, as the vessel started off as soon as possible after the river steamer had arrived. At Mozambique I changed on to a larger German steamer and came home by Zanzibar, Mombasa, and the Suez Canal. The voyage is an extremely interesting one; but the German line is certainly not to be recommended, if the vessel I came home on is typical. I was glad to leave the boat at Marseilles, from which place, travelling overland. I reached home a few days before Christmas, feeling that I had had a glorious time, and had gone through most interesting experiences.

THE END

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